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ESSAYS ON ENGLISH WRITERS,

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE GENTLE LIFE."

(James Hain Friswell)

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PART of the substance of this book has appeared in a popular magazine; but very much has been added, and some has been taken away. The Essays are intended as a guide for self-helpers, which points out what to read, and how it should be read; and incidentally a view—presumably a new and fresh one—of the origin and antagonistic elements in English literature, is given. Without dogmatism, as the author hopes, these pages are not without opinion freely expressed; nor has their mission, that of carrying into thousands of homes a knowledge and love of English literature been without results, for letters, not only from England, but from Australia, Canada, and even California, speak of classes formed to carry on the studies indicated, and of young *men and women* won from the too often silly

and evanescent tales and novels of the day, to the pure and noble study of our glorious literature. That the good fortune which has hitherto attended these Essays may still wait upon the book is the only wish its author would express; but he would remind the reader of the purpose of this work, and would urge that the space occupied forbad a complete view of the most fertile field in the world, so that many names are barely mentioned or regretfully omitted. He has, lastly, publicly to thank Mr. Edward Pepper, who has before assisted him, for reading the book for the press, and for selecting the far greater part of the admirable extracts of the old writers which will be found in the early portion of this volume.

December, 1868.

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ESSAYS ON ENGLISH WRITERS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

ALL eminent men are, in a great measure, self-made. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Robert Lowe and Mr. John Stuart Mill, must each have had many tens of schoolfellows; nay, to point to an earlier and more wonderful example, in that Stratford Grammar School, where Shakespeare—he who had wrenched the key of Learning, and forcibly entered and made himself master of the house of Wisdom—first learnt *Hic, hæc, hoc*, genitive *Hujus*, which he has duly reproduced, there were many hundred boys nationally educated by the wise and beneficent Elizabeth—and but one Shakespeare, one Gladstone, one Mill, one Lowe. It follows that the difference lies in the boy or the man, and not in the school. All first-rate men, again, are to a great extent self-educated; so said Dr. Johnson, who, by the way, added that he, and all like him, had done their chief reading before they were eighteen; for it is indeed certain that, if there is no royal road to learning, there are still

a great many bye and private paths which are principally laid down by men themselves. Hence those who feel that they are deficiently educated should not despair on account of their want of schooling. It is true that a want of early training is a sad want, difficult to make up; but it can be made up, and there are now existing means of remedying that deficiency such as were never before obtainable. The faults of late and self-education are these: that he who wins learning by himself, with difficulty and with a great struggle, generally becomes, in some degree, arrogant and conceited. And it is from this, and only from this point of view, that Pope's often-quoted line—chiefly quoted to be misused—is true—

"A little learning is a dangerous thing."

But it is by no means true as a whole. A little learning is insufficient; one must "drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring;" because a little learning, like a little bread, or a little meat, makes us feel the want of more. "So a little philosophy," says Bacon, "inclineth a man to atheism;" but much philosophy and much learning both make a man more open to conviction and more reverent towards the All-knower.

The first promptings towards self-improvement, or the desire to know more, arise from a sensible deficiency in all of us. An uneducated man feels at a disadvantage amongst those who express themselves clearly, and debate upon what is interesting to all in an interesting way. The two principal subjects of human talk may be divided roughly into Politics and Religion; the concern about the things of this world, and the concern about those of the next. Morals or man-

ners are the domestic politics of us all, and no less so the domestic religion. But how are we to understand either of these without some tuition, some learning? If we understand neither, it is plain we are at the mercy of any rabid writer, or eloquent and plausible speaker, who may be in the right, but who more likely is simply like Belial, able "to make the worse appear the better reason." Hence the vulgar—meaning the common people, and so called from a Latin phrase, *mobile vulgus* —the moveable, easily excited, common people are peculiarly the prey of the eloquent demagogue, who, in every age, is and has been opposed to education. Hence it is that Shakespeare, a self-educated and truly wise man, makes Jack Cade hang the clerk of Chatham, with his pen and inkhorn round his neck, because he had been found teaching little boys to read. Hence the Pharisees were opposed to the Saviour, who not only opened portions of the Scriptures to the doctors, but also proclaimed it as one of the peculiar objects of His mission, and proof of His Divine calling, that the poor should have the gospel preached to them. Hence, too, many who would be only satisfied by having their own views disseminated, are against any scheme of national education: for instance, a Roman Catholic priest threatened an Irish landlord to have his schools shut up—schools in which Roman Catholic children were instructed by their own teachers in their own faith—unless those schools were put under his immediate direction. Hence, also, on the other side of the question, Mr. John Bright objects to newspapers having leading articles written in them, because these articles undoubtedly influence opinion. Now, the only cure for *all this* and such like tyranny, the only guard

against "my" dogmatism and "your" dogmatism, is to make people think justly and rightly upon a common principle. The result may not please you or me, but it will ennoble and enlighten the people; and the means is Education.

Let us first, however, understand what is the meaning of the word education; for all understanding depends upon the meaning of words. Education (*e*, Latin, from, out of, and *duco*, I lead) is a leading out of ignorance, an exodus from that land of Egyptian darkness and bondage. But remember, it is a means, not an end. No man or woman is ever perfectly educated: that is, his or her education is never finished. It begins from the cradle, and ends, it is generally believed, in the grave; perhaps—and the view is a sublime one—our education then best commences when spirit is freed from the flesh. For this reason it is absurd to talk of "finishing academies"—both words being ignorantly used. Our education is *never finished.*

This explanation of the word education will serve to illustrate the first step to be taken in self-improvement; which is, to try, as hard as the self-teacher can, to understand every word he reads, and, as a consequence of this, to put aside all books and all writers that he cannot understand. Such books burden and fill his mind with useless lumber. Such writers themselves, too, it may be added, do not always express clearly what they wish to convey, and therefore are obscure, hidden, wordy, and dry to the humble student. When a man knows what he is writing about, he writes plainly, simply, gracefully; and the result is that, although the subject may be dry, the mind of the reader is refreshed. A clock to a savage who knows nothing

of time, a thermometer to a negro who knows nothing of the measurement of heat, are simply worthless articles; very admirable in themselves, but beyond the comprehension of the individual. As with stomachs, so with minds: a ruminating animal would be killed or starved with a plentiful supply of flesh meat; a tiger could not live upon grass. The duty of the self-educator is therefore to seize eagerly that which he does understand, and to nourish his mind with it, and to reject that which he cannot comprehend, or to defer it until he shall be more advanced, and able to master it.

Now, in some sort to make a fair beginning, the first thing is to understand the meaning of words. They are most important things; just as bricks make a wall, so words build up a book. No man who wishes to educate himself should be without a dictionary, nor should he ever pass by a word which he does not understand. If he take this trouble, he will be far on the way of self-improvement in a very short time. Horne Tooke, in his "Diversions of Purley" (a book which has suggested Dean Trench's "Study of Words," and Dean Alford's "Queen's English," both of which are very amusing as well as useful books, admirable in many ways, though not perfect), says that he was made the victim in a court of law of two prepositions and a conjunction—OF, and CONCERNING, and THAT, which he maintains, and quite rightly, that the lawyers do not understand. The reason why lawyers do not understand English—the result being the misconstruction and frequent unjust miscarriage of our laws—is because, lawyers being originally priests and Normans, the laws were written in Norman-French and Latin, and the words (fatal result!) bore a different signification in

their rude jargon from that which they bear in common parlance. Nor will they, while they are allowed to hide themselves behind slang and wordiness, ever be much less than a curse, when they should be a blessing. In 1839, long after Tooke wrote, the Court of Queen's Bench, Sir F. Pollock, Mr. Justice Coleridge, the Attorney-General, Sir J. Campbell, and other learned lawyers, disputed at considerable length about the meaning of the word UPON as a preposition of time, and hardly one knew whether it meant *after* or *before*. So grave a person as the Attorney-General said, "It may mean *before—there can be no doubt at all!*" Happily Sir F. Pollock, still alive, a very honoured old man, and learned in words, told them that, in the whole thirty meanings of the word in Johnson, it never meant *before*. It clearly means "after." "*Upon* this being read, the Chancellor remarked," &c. "*Upon* this news being brought, the army marched," &c. But enough has been said with regard to this one word to show the importance of persons thoroughly mastering the meaning of every word. It is not only ridiculous to use fine words out of their sense, like Mrs. Malaprop, but it is miserably hurtful. A person, having acquired a word, and thinking it fine, may go through life using it in a foolish way, and hurting his own interests thereby, as did a worthy man, otherwise accomplished, who would use "culmination" for "calumniation," and "innuendo" for "incognito." The best way is to study words, to masterthem, and then they will come properly to us when we want them; or to follow Cæsar's example, and avoid unaccustomed and large-swelling words as one would a rock in the sea.

Words mean things: they are living things. A man

who knows how to use them has an unmeasured power: hence, in the quarrels of authors, there is much bitterness, because, knowing the value of their words, they use them so that they will cut. The "Times" once proved, from a passage in Mr. Lowe's volume of speeches, that Mr. Bright had said much more bitter things against the working man than ever Mr. Lowe had, whose words were not against the non-electors (Reformers), but *against the electors*, and were quite true. But Mr. Lowe is a master of his words, and they are remembered: Mr. Bright is a great orator, and his words sparkle and exhilarate, but they are too soon forgotten. Yet both these gentlemen are worth study; both are self-made men, and owe their advancement to a knowledge of words. While learning words, the student should speak slowly, weigh well what he says, and not utter the thought until it has properly suggested itself. When the thought is really present—though men, equally with women, "rattle on" often without the "ghost" of a thought—it will clothe itself in proper words; and a man may often be struck with his own eloquence. To return to Mr. Bright: it is because he really does feel and think—rightly or wrongly—that he speaks so warmly and so well.

In studying for improvement, it is important to know how to read a book; a much heavier task than many take it to be. From careless readers we have now many careless writers; but, where the book is good, it deserves to be well treated. One may take it also as a fact, that the reader really takes up a book to use it, not to gallop or to hurry through it. A man should take up a book as he would sit down to his dinner—to digest it and receive nourishment from it. It is well

that he should know what he is about; that he should read and think over the title-page, acquaint himself, if he can, with some little history of the author, some hint as to whether he is trustworthy or biased. Then he should carefully read the preface, and master the idea that the author had when he wrote the book. He should then glance over the contents, look at the subdivisions and chapters, and finally read the book, if he choose to do so. This, which may seem a roundabout way to some, is in reality the shortest way. Some books, says Lord Bacon, are to be *tasted*, some to be read and digested. Let us presume that the work is of the common class, without any thought in it—a farrago of notions huddled together in haste, and made only for sale. The self-improver will save all his time by a preliminary study; oftentimes the title will tell him all that he wants to know; more often the title, the preface, and contents will assure him that he has little to learn, and he will put aside the book and pass on to worthier food. For books are like men: sometimes their prefaces and addresses are by far the worthiest parts of them. As the reader progresses in his studies and gains in experience, he will find that there grows up in him almost an intuition, by which he can tell, in a very few pages at least, a bad, empty, and pretentious book from that which will inform, teach, and render him wiser.

To know something of books and their writers, and to know well the significations of words, will be two safe and admirable bases upon which to rear a superstructure of higher knowledge. The realms of knowledge are wide. No man has traversed them all; and the

more a wise man traverses them, the more he discovers that there is much he will never know. The true student, like Moses beholding the Promised Land from Pisgah, finds that the most beautiful and admirable prospects open out before him on every side; that the land, in the strong symbolism of Scripture, floweth with milk and honey; that, boundless as the supply is, there is more than enough for all; that there is no satiety in knowledge; that the more one devours the abundant supply, the more one desires; that true knowledge increases reverence, fear, and happiness: but also, like Moses, he knows that it will not be given him in this life wholly to overrun and possess that fertile land. The student will therefore limit his task, and determine to rest contentedly ignorant of many things; but, to fit himself for the knowledge of words and things, he will do well, should time and opportunity permit him, to enter at least into a preparatory study of two languages wherewith our own is most intimately bound up; and these are Latin and French. One would not wholly pass by Greek, from which many of our derivations come; but it will be foolish to advise him to try to grasp too much. Latin is not a difficult language to master, so far as the rudiments go, and the ability to read it with ease; and French, as a living language, may be said to be easier. It follows, then, that, if he takes an easy primer—and, with no disrespect for the Public Schools' Primer, a modification of the "Eton Grammar" will suit him best—and for some three months works away at the book till the declensions, conjugations, and the primary forms of the different parts of speech are well known to him, by

writing out, from a good dictionary, the Latin roots of words opposite the words themselves, he will in a short time begin to look with a different light upon the meanings of words. Take the words "amorous," from *amor*, love; "uxoriousness,"—*uxor*, a wife; "inimical" —*in*, not, *amicus*, a friend, and other simple derivations, as instances. When the student knows the real meaning of these and such like, he may be led not to use them; in fact, he may think that "loving," "wife-loving," and "unfriendly," all English words, are just as good, if not better; but he will find that the Latinised English has a slightly different meaning. An amorous man means something not so noble as a loving man; one who is uxorious is weakly fond of his wife; and so on. Read in this way, passages of little meaning become instinct with life, beauties appear in writers which were never seen before, swelling words of leader-writers and public orators become merely swelling words or nonsense, and the calm writing of the wise man gains considerably in strength. Nor need he be afraid of having to learn too much to get at the meaning of words. We have it on record (said, too, in a friendly way, by one who was a great scholar, Ben Jonson) that Shakespeare "had small Latin and less Greek;" but yet it is well known that no man knew better how to use English words than he did; that some of his lines convey more than whole pages of other writers; nay, that he himself has invented, in spite of his want of learning, numerous excellent words, which express to the mind, as a picture does to the eye, exactly what the author means. Presuming, then, that not a perfect, but a fair acquaintance with Latin and French can be gained,

even in the course of his reading, by the student who is anxious to instruct himself, I will now enter upon the subject proper of the present volume.*

* It has been thought advisable to incorporate a number of specimens of various authors in the present volume. A mere list of names and dates, coupled with brief criticisms—and these last, however carefully prepared, are more or less unsatisfactory, unless supplemented with examples—cannot but be unprofitable at all times to the elementary student. As to the nature of the extracts, I may say that they have been *newly selected*, with very few exceptions, from the originals, for the present work. In doing this, I have endeavoured to avoid the well-worn tracks of most of the books of specimens that are at present current.

Chapter II.

THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

"HISTORY," says the quaint but full and sufficient author, Thomas Fuller, in his "History of the Church," "maketh a young man to be old without either wrinkles or grey hairs, privileging him with the experience of age without either the infirmities or the inconveniences thereof." This estimate of history is hardly sufficient: it takes only one view. It is a grand thing to be gifted with the judgment and experience of age when young, to know what results certain experiments will lead to, to be able to stem or to foretell a revolution, or to "wield at will the fierce democratie:" but there is another use for history. Without it we can know nothing of our country. It is like a field-glass, which gives us a long backward view over the painful passage of our fathers, and which, turned forwards, will enable us to make out, with some little distinctness at least, the career which our children will have to run. Without history, man loses much of his grandeur and his place in the world; for, as Shakespeare has so acutely said, one of his chief mental character-

istics consists in his "looking before and after." Now, unless he knows what his country has passed through, her trials, struggles, endeavours, how can he know what her liberties, her privileges, and her blessings are? The danger of a new or of an old country being represented and governed by an ignorant and unthinking class is this—that, looking chiefly to the present, forgetful of the landmarks of history, without any sense of danger, heedless, because ignorant, of the warnings around them, they drive the ship of the State on the rocks, and wreck her before they know where they are. Ignorant of the past, they are contentious, and ungrateful for the present; Utopian in their notions, they outreach possibility, and are causelessly and ceaselessly disappointed. To instance a case which will touch us all: Irish demagogues have appealed to the history of Ireland, saying that the people have been oppressed and dispossessed of their rights, and have talked of the glorious days of the old kings, as they now appeal to an imaginary republic. But History—that of Giraldus Cambrensis as a chronicle, of Dr. Thomas Leland as a philosophic, or of Thomas Moore as a compendious narrative—tells us that Ireland never had a king, but merely a set of native chiefs, almost as savage as are the New Zealanders now; that the Septs ravaged and fought each other, sometimes eating their enemies in wild brutality, always at war, until they voluntarily called in the (English) Norman knights to pacify the land by making one party dominant; that government after government, from that of Henry II., who first of our kings called himself Lord of Ireland, to that of the wise Elizabeth, and thence to that of the stern Cromwell; from William III. to that of the just

and generous Victoria, has always found the Irish turbulent, jealous of each other, distrustful of strangers, and hating even that clemency and mercy which they experience under an English government, and those civilising laws and civic rights which they never enjoyed under their own. Contemporary history again, and the knowledge obtained by travelling, will help us to know, and in our case to understand and to love, our own land; for everything in this world is comparative, and it is the greatest proof of ignorance that any one can give, to disparage institutions without understanding them, to attempt matters which are impossible, to render men discontented with that which no State can alter, and to sow discord between class and class, when true knowledge has declared that progress can spring from peace alone. Therefore it is that "histories," says Lord Bacon, "make men wise;" and he adds that, in proportion as we love our country, we shall desire to know its origin, progress, and its steps towards civilisation, and that which has led to its present importance or degradation in the scale of nations.

The readiest way to acquire this knowledge—and we are writing especially for self-improvers—is to begin first with little books. Thomas à Kempis said that he was fond of two things, from which he got much of his humble wisdom; and these were "little corners and little books." Now, not only are great books great evils, but they often are so diffuse in style, and so wanting in arrangement, that they confuse instead of teach. Our student's first plan should be to survey the country, and to survey the history of the country: some such hand-books as Goldsmith's "England," the "Victoria History of England," or Ince's

"Outlines of English History," should be read. Let him write out an account of the number of sovereigns, the extent and duration of their reigns, and a list of the great "houses" or families, and get from the books before him a bird's-eye view of the whole matter. He will know how long such a king has reigned and such a dynasty has lasted, and will have acquainted himself with some of the landmarks of history. At the same time the reader will do well to guard himself against making any more use of a sovereign than as a landmark, except under particular circumstances. The great fault of certain histories is that they are the histories of wars, battles, and intrigues, of the Court, but not of the people, religion, manners, and laws. Still it must be distinctly understood that, while the people have been too generally neglected, there are some reigns—let us instance those of Alfred, Edward I., Henry VII., and Queen Elizabeth —where the life and actions of the sovereign are the very centre of interest, and the actions of the people are little else than a generous and impulsive attempt to follow the leadings of a great mind, or a struggle against that great mind. Because we are of the people, we must not entertain that common and foolish error that the people is all and all. One great man every now and then arises, and is sent, fashioned, and instructed by God for His own purposes, to whom the whole of that noun of multitude, the people, that "many-headed monster," is but a heap of dust or a hill of ants. True it is, that, like the poor wise man in Ecclesiastes, this great man may save his city, save his nation, make it, as did Alfred and Cromwell, what it was and what it is, and he may be utterly forgotten and

overlooked by the people; but he is the great man still. The student of history will recognize such men in every age, standing up like solitary towers in the city of God; and he will study them with as much interest as he will study the constitution, religion, government, and laws of the people.

The first clear step in advance in reading history is for the student to get a general idea of what he is going to read about. Having set his face towards a country, a map or a guide-book may be very usefully studied; then let him take up the great history, and learn what he can from it. Now the histories of England are altogether too many, and too few. There are too many small *précis*, or catechismal histories, and not enough exhaustive and excellent histories. Perhaps, indeed, as we are said to have only one sauce, which is melted butter, so we may plead guilty to having only one general history, which is "Hume and Smollett's, with Hughes's Continuation;" a curious admixture it is admitted to be on all hands, a bookseller's "make up," as it stands, but still, on the whole, a useful book for the general reader. There is another very attractive and good book, which may be used to supplement this, which is Knight's "Pictorial History of England," being a history of the people as well as of their kings; and there is a history of England by Mr. Charles Knight himself, called the "Popular History of England," itself again abridged into a bulky volume of more than nine hundred pages, as the "School History of England," well worth studying. I purposely abstain from mentioning here the translation of Rapin's "History of England, with Continuation by Tindal;" also Carte's "History of England," and those of

Guthrie, Ralph, Brady, Tyrrell, Oldmixon, or Bishop White Kennett. These are for the matured student, as are also the more elaborate histories of England commenced, but left unfinished, by Dr. Henry, Sharon Turner, and Dr. Lingard; or that, still in progress, from the pen of Mr. Froude. Beyond these, there are many fragments of history—histories of the Anglo-Saxons, of the Roman settlers, of the Norman Conquest, of certain reigns of queens and kings, all useful to be studied. Of these I shall speak further on. They are of course particularly useful to the student of history, or of certain periods of history; but they should not be consulted before a general view has been taken up by the reader. There are Lord Macaulay, Earl Russell, Lord Mahon, Horace Walpole, Father Newman, Sir Francis Palgrave, and many others, who have illustrated periods, and who are entitled to our gratitude and admiration. But to read these before we have read a systematic history would be folly. We should have all our thoughts scattered, so to express it, before they were collected; for we must remember, with Mr. Froude, that in history "the most careful investigations are diverging roads; the farther men travel upon them, the greater the interval by which they are divided." In the eyes of David Hume, the history of the Saxon princes is "the scuffling of kites and crows." Father Newman would mortify the conceit of a degenerate modern England by pointing to the sixty saints and the hundred confessors who were trained in the royal palaces of her early princes for the calendar of the blessed. How vast a chasm yawns between the two conceptions of the same era!

But beyond this conception, which is easily accounted

for, David Hume being a philosophic infidel or rationalist, and Father Newman an enthusiastic Christian ascetic and Romish priest, there are other and more common divergencies. One man will take up the period of Alfred, and, seeing the mighty seeds then sown, declare it to be the nursery of all England's greatness. To another man the reigns of Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth, the period of the death-struggle between Rome and England (*in* England, too, which is very important), will appear the grandest, most eventful, and valuable of all. The history of England seemed, it would appear, hardly of any value to Lord Macaulay before the Revolution of the seventeenth century. William III. is his great hero. Mr. Carlyle places his central figure yet earlier in time: it is the great Protector, Oliver Cromwell. Mr. Froude goes yet farther back, to Queen Elizabeth; and, adds Froude, "the Reformation was the first outcome from centuries of folly and ferocity." Now, the student may follow these divergencies, these branches from the high road of literature, which have been happily called the bye-paths in her domain, when he likes; but his first object should be to walk along a broad and beaten path, and to view the country in its totality.

The reader will gain, I think, the best prospect from the pages of David Hume, or, if he like it better, the "Student's Hume" (published by Mr. Murray); or, better still, let him read the original along with the latter, which latter corrects the inaccuracies of Hume, supplements his matter, and invariably gives a list of the best authorities to be consulted. Hume is a philosophic historian; that is to be remembered. He is not a Christian, and, this being openly stated, there is nothing

more to say about it, except that he is much more fair, open, honest, and tender than many Christian historians; but that his state of mind hindered him from comprehending ascetic, spasmodic, religionist times. A monk who, to Thomas à Kempis, was *bonus religiosus*—a good practical Christian—was to David Hume a luxurious, selfish, lazy being, or a fool. There is much to be said on both sides; only, when we are bowling at truth, it is as well to know the bias of the ball. Secondly, Hume lacks sympathy and enthusiasm; and, thirdly, in his time, accuracy, by the consultation of original sources, was not so possible as it now is. Now for his virtues. He was, says a late writer, "a very great man; and, unfortunately, our history is not always written by very great men." His history, therefore, can only be superseded by that of a greater man. He is clear, definite, precise; he thinks out his matter, takes his side, does not confuse his reader, and always informs him. He hardly ever tires him, because his history is written in a charming style; and remember, style is of immense value in a large book. Some men, in our most expensive newspapers, write articles that confuse, not inform, and which you cannot read, although they have only eighty lines each; but the articles or essays of others you can always read, being so clearly and simply and pleasantly written, that you may go over them again and again. Hume rarely tires you: he is not "stuffy," nor is he a Dryasdust. He is stately and dignified, and writes like a nobleman, as he was in blood, and would have been in rank in any country but our own. He had indulged for years in long habits of reflection upon human nature: his insight is acute, polished, and profound. He is not a

one-sided man: he thinks upon many things, and analyses before he judges. If he is not, like Shakespeare, a myriad-minded man, he at any rate looks on many sides. When he has made up his mind, he is a partisan, not a bigot; neither an Emersonian loose thinker, who weighs this and that and pronounces hap-hazard that "Cæsar and Pompey are very much alike, especially Cæsar." Hume takes his side, and, while he is always very just and generous where Christianity is not concerned, he, like Lord Byron, scorns being impartial. Study him, therefore, and give him due honour; afterwards one may contrast his views with those of more special students.

Along with the History of England in "Knight's Pictorial England," written by Macfarlane, Craik, and others, there is bound up and interwoven a History of Scotland, and one also of Ireland. These two kingdoms now and for ever, so long as we remain a people, form part of us. As was natural, they, the smaller peoples, have been dominated by the larger; but, properly speaking, they have never been conquered, having fought with a wonderful perseverance and bravery. The Scots, indeed, were beaten and partially civilized by the Romans, and the lowland Scots are as much Anglo-Saxon as we; yet, though their language bears traces of the ascendancy of the French much more than ours does, that arises not from any subjection to Norman rule, but from their opposition to it, which led to a close alliance between Scotland and France, so that French surnames are still common in Scotland, and Scottish surnames not less so in France; an alliance of which Scott's novel of "Quentin Durward" furnishes, in the account of the Scot h Guard, an apt illustration.

Thus, when Burns writes about a "silver tassie," he uses the old French word *tasse;* and such words lie thick and many in the common tongue. The Highlanders, again, were originally Irish (*Scoti*); and their tongue, Gaelic, has the closest affinity to the Erse. But, for years before the Union, Scotland existed as a pugnacious little kingdom, and her history, which is merely one of battles, murders, and intrigues—for the Scots always used their monarch badly—is a turbulent chronicle, deserving of study, in the pages of Sir Walter Scott, or of Patrick Fraser Tytler. Scott's "History of Scotland," published in the Edinburgh Cabinet Library, is well worth reading; and the same may be said of the "History of Ireland," by Thomas Moore, published in the same series. Let any one read those two books attentively, and he will see how immensely both Scotland and Ireland have gained by the partnership. Certainly the former has gained more than the latter, because she has been wiser and more industrious, and (strangely enough) has always loved the English kings —after 1745—while she never really cared for any of her own. On the other side, the student of history will see how much the central kingdom has gained also by the Union; how she is naturally strengthened in character and in many other points, and how the three different characteristics form a fair combination.

After these two books, which will require to be noted and to be mastered as to their leading features and facts, the student may take up Sir James Mackintosh's "History of England," which is different from any others, being a philosophical history "of the progress of a great people towards liberty during six centuries." That sentence of the introduction strikes the key-note

of Mackintosh's book. He is always looking for the progress of the people, from a Whig point of view. He has no sympathy with the hero, priest, or sage, in a "barbarous" time. He looks upon the times of Chaucer (Richard II.), of the Crusades, and especially of our Danish and Saxon ancestors, as barbarous and hateful. Nothing is good which does not comprehend a Whig family and a revolution; whereas, every day now makes us better acquainted with the courtesy, the good-nature, the honesty, politeness, civilization, the extreme bravery, soul, and religious faith of those men of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. With these provisoes, and with the unpleasant set-off of a not very charming style, and a want of enthusiasm, Mackintosh's History, which comes down to the end of the reign of Elizabeth, may be read with great advantage. It has been stated that the friends of Sir James Mackintosh, anxious to defend him from the many imputations against his History, have asserted that the work is a bookseller's concoction, and that he did not write it, although it was published under his name. In the "Life of Sir James Mackintosh," by his son (London: Moxon, 1836: vol. ii. p. 456), it is stated, clearly and unequivocally, that his father wrote the English History, and not a word is said implying the smallest doubt of the fact. Indeed, many circumstances are told respecting the book, and the studies and efforts brought to bear upon it by the author. A far higher work, both in conception and execution, is Hallam's "Constitutional History of England, from the Accession of Henry VII. to the Death of George II." Mr. Hallam, it will be seen, takes a small but important period of our history, but his subject—the growth and extension

of the English Constitution—is most important. Hallam has a calm, judicial mind, and is a supporter of principles, not of men. His style is so equable that, unless to a student, he affords but dry reading. Two other volumes of this learned writer hardly belong to our present subject, but are so good that we here recommend them. They are "A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," and "The History of Literature during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries." But these works should not be read until the history of the student's own country is fairly mastered.

Chapter III.

HISTORY AND HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY.

HORACE Walpole, in his "Reminiscences," tells an anecdote of his father, who, when sick and weary, replied to the question what should be read to him, "Anything but history, for that I know to be false." The student will wisely bear in mind such a sweeping sentence as this, and in his endeavour to understand history will take care to check one historian by another. For this reason, but hardly for any other, he should consult Dr. Lingard's "History of England to the Revolution of 1688" (published originally in eight quarto volumes, from 1819 to 1830, and since reprinted in octavo and duodecimo, by Dolman), because that learned gentleman has written from a Roman Catholic point of view, and represents things very differently from the Protestant historians. On the whole, he has not done this unfairly. His bias is a natural one, and the love he has for his faith excuses many of its errors and cruelties. Nor has the student of history anything to fear from a partisan. It is the business of the former

to find out truth, or to get, as Samuel Daniel says, in his History of England, "as neare Truth's likenesse as hee possibly can." Although his style is rigid, dry, and unpleasant, Dr. Lingard possesses calmness, great controversial ability, much more fairness than his opponents credit him with, acute discrimination of character, and much descriptive power. And in addition to all this, like Sharon Turner, he has, beyond Hume, the rare merit of industry, and has gone to original documents and sources of information, so that his work is very valuable. "But," adds a critic—and we quite agree with the censure—"it is undeniable that he has palliated the atrocious murders of St. Bartholomew, blackened the characters of Cranmer, Anne Boleyn, and Queen Elizabeth, and generally been severe in his judgments, not to say unjust, upon all concerned in the Reformation. The reason is not far to seek: he considers the Reformation a folly and a crime, and its authors as blunderers, sinful, or wicked and designing wretches." Nor is Dr. Lingard very fond of the Commonwealth or Parliament; still he gives the great men of the seventeenth century this praise—"They governed only four years; yet under their auspices the conquests of Ireland and Scotland were achieved, and a navy was created the rival of that of Holland, and the terror of the rest of Europe; but there existed an essential error in their form of government. Deliberative assemblies are always slow in their proceedings; yet the pleasure of Parliament, as the supreme power, was to be taken on every subject. To this habit of procrastination was perhaps owing the extinction of its authority. It disappointed the hopes of the country."

How a deliberative assembly could be called slow,

which in four years had conquered and settled two countries, had raised England to be the equal if not the superior of the greatest Power in Europe, and had yet preserved the liberty of the subject, and the freedom of religious opinion, it would perhaps be difficult for even Dr. Lingard to explain. However, there is no doubt that his elaborate "History of England" is a valuable work, displaying great erudition, calm research, and as much fairness as one can reasonably expect.

Mr. Godwin's "History of the Commonwealth of England," published in 1824-27, which is written with great force and power, has too much the spirit of the republican partisan; but it has brought to light certain valuable facts in illustration of one of the most important, if not *the* most important of periods of English history. Indeed, after the student has thoroughly mastered the "History of England," and checked that history by comparing the opinions of one partisan with those of another, he will do well to devote himself to the study of particular periods, or of particular characters, as his taste may suggest.

In the previous chapter I particularly advised the study of the characters of great men, because those men, by their innate force and character, always mould and form the thoughts of the leading minds in their generation, and that succeeding them. Presuming then that we clearly understand the man, we shall have a great light thrown upon the character of the age in which he lives; it may be that of contrast, it may be that of similarity, but one way or another we shall get that light. It has been said that a very great man has three periods: in the first, he is

regarded as a rogue or a dupe; in the second, as a martyr; in the third, as a hero. But this is not always true; it is true of those who oppose, but not of those who lead peoples, in their emergencies, and political or social revolutions.

This second way of studying history—that is, taking the period which may be most attractive to the taste of the student—will resolve itself into the study of groups of men and characters, and of political and religious opinion. For both these methods, books of historical biography are not merely useful but essential; and these should be supplemented by public records, documents of the period, county and family histories. Lest the reader should be driven too much a-field, it will be best to point out to him certain books in which he will find almost all that he wants. I will begin with "The History of the Anglo-Saxons," by Sir Francis Palgrave; and "The History of the Anglo-Saxons," by Mr. Sharon Turner, a London solicitor, and the father of the present Rev. Sidney Turner, Inspector of Her Majesty's Reformatories. Mr. Turner has an intricate style, and a certain ambitious pomp and parade, which is sometimes most unsatisfactory; but the early volumes of his "History of England to the Death of Queen Elizabeth," published in six volumes quarto and twelve volumes octavo, are very valuable, and are thoroughly well compiled. Sir Francis Palgrave has also written "The Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth in the Anglo-Saxon Period," which is a truly able work, and which introduces us to the founders of English character, laws, and liberty. Mr. Charles Mills has published a history of an important movement, "The History of Chivalry and the Crusades;"

and Mr. G. P. R. James, better known as a novelist, has also written a picturesque "History of Chivalry," a "History of Charlemagne," which may be studied side by side with the History of England at the same period, and a "History of Richard Cœur-de-lion." Although these last-named works hardly reach, perhaps, the dignity of fine historical productions, there is a realization of the temporal and local truth, a picturesqueness of narrative, a vigour and vividness, which will especially interest the student; nor is Mr. James at all deficient in industry or research. Among picturesque histories may be mentioned Miss Agnes Strickland's "Lives of the Queens of England," and those of her imitator, Mrs. Green. Miss Strickland is picturesque, clear, and always interesting. She has not much mental grasp, and always writes like a woman, which is no more than was to be expected; but she has this merit, that she realizes the home feelings, the costume, and the domestic life of the period. To draw a simile from the stage, she dresses her characters extremely well; and the reader does grasp a certain amount of suggestive information from her pages.

Of a much higher standard, calm and clear, yet brilliant and logical, is Mr. John Forster, the historian of "Statesmen of the Commonwealth," "The Arrest of the Five Members by Charles the First," and various historical and biographical essays, all of which are profound and careful studies, elaborated and most conscientiously finished, so that of Pym, Hampden, Vane, and the great statesmen who surrounded the Protector, one manages to get a very clear and sufficient view, hardly indeed to be obtained elsewhere. But the most valuable contribution of its kind to historical biography

is "Carlyle's Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, with Elucidations;" a great but fragmentary work, consisting of all the letters recoverable, or, it may be, extant, of the great Protector, with elucidations, as Carlyle modestly calls his valuable notes, which explain and connect these letters. By them we are enabled to view the great man as he lived, thought, and prayed. We find him a thoroughly earnest, unselfish, devout man, living continually, as it were, in the presence of God, with a thorough belief in His personal help, with a tender love for his wife, children, and friends, an honest care for his soldiers, a reverent appreciation of his own work and duty, and a wide and somewhat pitying love for the nation and people under him. Had David Hume seen these letters, it would have been impossible for him to tax Cromwell with hypocrisy; a fanatic he might have been in Hume's view, but certainly no hypocrite. The value of these personal studies of great men is seen in the repeated attempt, often successful, to rehabilitate, as it is termed, some historical character. One of the earliest of these useful and necessary studies is a view of Richard III. by Horace Walpole, afterwards Lord Orford, in which a great deal is done to remove from Richard "Crookback" the character of an odious and bloodthirsty tyrant, as painted by Shakespeare, who followed Holinshed. Mr. J. A. Froude, an admirable writer and painstaking historian, has proceeded in this way with the character of Henry the Eighth, in his "History of England from the Fall of Wolsey," and afterwards with the history of the reign of Elizabeth. This great queen perhaps loses somewhat of her height in Mr. Froude's pictures, and appears more in the light of a natural,

very clever, yet vacillating woman. On the other hand, her statesmen appear much greater, nobler, and more far-seeing. Lord Burleigh is the central figure; and the plots of the Papists, and guilt of Mary Queen of Scots, related with a continual reference to, and checking by, the State Papers themselves, are conclusively established. The grandeur of the period, the nobility and astuteness of the English character, the cunning, bravery, and quick intellect of English statesmen, are all educed in a masterly manner, and some of the episodes, such as the murder of Darnley, are told with a force and vigour which are quite unsurpassed.

Lord Macaulay, as an historian, can by no means be passed over; although it seems doubtful whether this brilliant reviewer and vivid and picturesque writer, with his lively, glittering, and interesting style, will hold with posterity so high a rank as he does at the present time. His History is a fragment. Had he lived to complete it, he would possibly have been overwhelmed with the immense mass of materials out of which he would have had to weave a complete picture of the large and important space occupied by the reign of George III. His chief hero is William III., a great man, and a greater king; and, having a sudden and sharp grasp of character, all the statesmen and authors of whom he writes stand out brilliantly and clearly in his pages. His great faults are a "review" style, and a certain dogmatism inseparable from his class of mind. He never seems to doubt what he narrates, nor to doubt that what he says is the absolute truth. His style, hence, becomes cumbrous and heavy—glittering, it may be, but glittering like cut steel or polished lead; and, if looked at in the writings of some of his imitators, in

whose hands the historian's mannerisms and peculiarities are not relieved by sterling qualities, appears both ridiculous and offensive. Macaulay's Biographical Essays are charmingly written, clear, concise, and, for their size, very exhaustive and full. They are delightful reading; but should always be approached with some knowledge of the subject. "Lord Bacon" and "Warren Hastings" are his two best essays; then come "Chatham" (Pitt), "Lord Clive," "Addison," "Walpole," "Ranke's Popes," "Hallam's History," "Croker's Boswell's Johnson," and "Lord Byron." These are of the very best kind of review articles, and are based upon a thorough understanding of the subject, great scholarship, unwearied industry, and a fine intellectual power—a combination, indeed, which few other men could bring into the field of literature. Of course Macaulay is a partisan; he makes up his mind upon what he thinks, and proceeds upon that basis; hence he has laid himself open to the attacks of petty controversial critics, who can count tenpenny nails, and know that five and four do not make ten, though they come very near it. His character of Lord Bacon and his estimate of Penn were especially the objects of such attacks; but he did not suffer much from his contemptible assailants, who sought to make themselves notorious by controverting the assertions of so brilliant a writer. Happily, but little of his light was reflected upon the dull masses projected against him.

Amongst other aids to the historian must not be overlooked those which are afforded by certain learned and industrious authors who calendar State Papers, and arrange the materials whence history is made. I may therefore mention here with honour Mr. S. Duffus

Hardy's "Catalogue of the Lord Chancellors," and "Materials relating to the History of Great Britain," in which are hints and facts not only curious, but of inestimable value to the readers as well as the writers of history. Dr. Brewer's "History of Henry VIII.," and many other publications, come under this head.

Another way of understanding a particular period or reign is afforded by taking the contemporary historians of that period, although these are almost always sure to be partisans—many of them indeed tediously dry and wearisome—and this plan would perhaps consume much valuable time with but small results. Lord Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion" is a work which everybody must read who desires to understand the personal feelings which were elicited, and the men who occupied prominent positions, in that stormy period; and the student, if possible, should endeavour to obtain an edition of it later than the year 1825, as all editions published previous to that date are more or less corrupt. This great work, which was first printed in six volumes, has none of the polish of Hume, nor of the brilliancy of Macaulay, but it is written in an easy, familiar, and flowing style, and is enlivened by descriptions of the chief personages in the history, many of whom were the author's familiar friends. These are painted with a freshness and a minuteness which only personal knowledge and direct intimacy can give. The author (b. 1608, d. 1674), although he should have well known of what stuff kings are made, and had experienced the foolish hauteur of one Charles, and the ingratitude and neglect of the other, is yet an uncompromising Royalist; and therefore certain deductions must be made. Thus, in speaking of

Hampden, he says that "he was a man of much greater cunning, or it may be" (he says sneeringly) "of the most discerning spirit, and of the greatest address and insinuation, to bring anything to pass which he desired, and who laid the design the deepest." Again: "He made a show of civility, and modesty, and humility, but afterwards appeared to be everybody when he cared less to keep on the mask." Clarendon's characters of Lord Falkland, and of Charles I., which are both celebrated portraits, are drawn in a much more favourable way. Cromwell stands out as one guilty of many crimes, against which damnation is denounced, and for which hell-fire is prepared; and, while great credit is given to him for his ability, the best that Clarendon can say of him is, that "he was a brave, wicked man." Read, however, with a knowledge of this bias, the History is valuable and exceedingly entertaining. Its faults are verbosity, want of arrangement, prolixity, and involution. The pages also are encumbered with a great quantity of matter which should be incorporated with the notes. Here is Clarendon's estimate of Charles the First:*—

"To speak first of his private qualifications as a man, before the mention of his princely and royal vir-

* I confine myself, in this part of the volume, to giving one specimen; and that is from Clarendon. My reasons for this are the following. The nature of historical writing renders it unsuitable for brief extraction, and, were an excerpt properly given, it would need to embrace some complete episode, which in its entirety would require more space than could fairly be allotted to it. In addition to this, extracts from the old historians would be to little purpose. Their individual style is of minor consideration; and the leading facts they have chronicled have been discriminately incorporated by our modern historians. Finally, to quote from these latter would in many cases be invidious, and, as has been already stated, attended with more or less difficulty.

tues: he was, if ever any, the most worthy of the title of an honest man; so great a lover of justice that no temptation could dispose him to a wrongful action, except it was so disguised to him that he believed it to be just. He had a tenderness and compassion of nature which restrained him from ever doing a hard-hearted thing; and therefore he was so apt to grant pardon to malefactors, that the judges of the land represented to him the damage and insecurity to the public that flowed from such his indulgence. And then he restrained himself from pardoning either murders or highway robberies, and quickly discerned the fruits of his severity by a wonderful reformation of these enormities. He was very punctual and regular in his devotions; he was never known to enter upon his recreations or sports, though never so early in the morning, before he had been at public prayers; so that on hunting days his chaplains were bound to a very early attendance. He was likewise very strict in observing the hours of his private cabinet devotions, and was so severe an exactor of gravity and reverence in all mention of religion, that he could never endure any light or profane word, with what sharpness of wit soever it was covered; and, though he was well pleased and delighted with reading verses made upon any occasion, no man durst bring before him anything that was profane or unclean. That kind of wit had never any countenance then. He was so great an example of conjugal affection that they who did not imitate him in that particular did not brag of their liberty; and he did not only permit, but direct his bishops to prosecute those scandalous vices in the ecclesiastical courts against persons of eminence and near relation to his service.

"His kingly virtues had some mixture and alloy that hindered them from shining in full lustre, and from producing those fruits they should have been attended with. He was not in his nature very bountiful, though he gave very much. This appeared more after the Duke of Buckingham's death, after which those showers fell very rarely; and he paused too long in giving, which made those to whom he gave less sensible of the benefit. He kept state to the full, which made his court very orderly; no man presuming to be seen in a place where he had no pretence to be. He saw and observed men long before he received them about his person; and did not love strangers, nor very confident men. He was a patient hearer of causes, which he frequently accustomed himself to at the council-board; and judged very well, and was dexterous in the mediating part: so that he often put an end to causes by persuasion, which the stubbornness of men's humours made dilatory in courts of justice.

"He was very fearless in his person, but not very enterprising. He had an excellent understanding, but was not confident enough of it; which made him oftentimes change his own opinion for a worse, and follow the advice of men that did not judge so well as himself. This made him more irresolute than the conjuncture of his affairs would admit: if he had been of a rougher and more imperious nature, he would have found more respect and duty. And his not applying some severe cures to approaching evils proceeded from the lenity of his nature, and the tenderness of his conscience, which in all cases of blood made him choose the softer way, and not hearken to severe counsels, how reasonably soever urged. This only restrained him from pursuing his advantage in the first Scottish ex-

pedition, when, humanly speaking, he might have reduced that nation to the most slavish obedience that could have been wished. But no man can say he had then many who advised him to it, but the contrary, by a wonderful indisposition all his council had to fighting or any other fatigue. He was always an immoderate lover of the Scottish nation, having not only been born there, but educated by that people, and besieged by them always, having few English about him till he was king; and the major number of his servants being still of that nation, who he thought could never fail him. And among these no man had such an ascendant over him, by the humblest insinuations, as Duke Hamilton had.

"As he excelled in all other virtues, so in temperance he was so strict that he abhorred all debauchery to that degree that at a great festival solemnity where he once was, when very many of the nobility of the English and Scots were entertained, being told by one who withdrew from thence what vast draughts of wine they drank, and 'that there was one earl who had drank most of the rest down, and was not himself moved or altered,' the king said that 'he deserved to be hanged;' and that earl coming shortly after into the room where his majesty was, in some gaiety, to show how unhurt he was from that battle, the king sent one to bid him withdraw from his majesty's presence; nor did he in some days after appear before him. . . .

"To conclude, he was the worthiest gentleman, the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best Christian that the age in which he lived produced. And if he were not the best king, if he were without some parts and qualities which have made some kings great and happy, no other

prince was ever unhappy who was possessed of half his virtues and endowments, and so much without any kind of vice."

Whitelocke's "Memorials of English Affairs," from the beginning of the reign of Charles I. to the Restoration, will correct many of Clarendon's mis-statements. The book is in the form of a diary. The author (b. 1605, d. 1676), was the legal adviser of Hampden during his ship-money prosecution.

Two important histories, similar to those mentioned above, are "The History of the Reformation of the Church of England," by Gilbert Burnet (b. 1643, d. 1715), and "The History of his own Time," by the same bishop. These, although the latter especially has been ridiculed, contradicted, and pooh-poohed by Swift in the most admirable manner, as also by his allies, Pope and Arbuthnot, are living works, spirited and vigorous, and written with a rapid ease which always makes them light and charming. "It seems," says Walpole, "as if he had just come from the king's closet, or from the apartments of the men whom he describes, and was telling his reader, in plain, honest terms, of what he had seen and heard." Burnet has been charged with dishonesty; but, although he is a partisan, there is no reason to suppose that he wilfully suppressed or warped the truth. Johnson said of him that "he would set his watch by a certain clock, and did not care whether that clock were right or wrong;" and this sufficiently indicates the style in which the honest bishop proceeds when he has made up his mind about a matter.

Two other books, which are excellent in their kind, and, though not historical, serve as Court pages to history, are "Pepys' Diary," and the "Diary of

John Evelyn." The one is the daily record of the pleasures, feastings, junketings, expenses, and clothes of a parvenu secretary of the navy (b. 1632, d. 1703), a greedy, avaricious, vain, and little-capable man, but yet one who, by putting down exactly what he saw, and heard, and felt, has thrown a more vivid light on the domestic manners of the people and the Court in the times in which he lived, than could possibly be done by a studied attempt. It is, like "Boswell's Life of Johnson," one of the most realistic books in existence; for, as with Defoe in fiction, the reader can see, hear, and touch the persons whom Pepys describes. "Evelyn's Diary" is of another character. It is the work of a learned and thoughtful gentleman (b. 1620, d. 1706), with a fine and cultivated mind, and sufficiently brings before us the riot, the waste, and the irreligion of the days of Charles II.; but it has not the *vivida vis* of the citizen chronicler above referred to. Both of these books—which are much more interesting than any novel—will be necessary to a thorough understanding of the important period which they treat of and elucidate.*

* One word of explanation may here properly be offered. The reader, perhaps, will be somewhat disheartened by the large array of works that, in this and the ensuing papers, have been, or will be, set before him; and at their seeming inaccessibility, owing to the fact that many of them are only to be obtained at a price generally beyond the means of a self-improving student. But both these difficulties may be dispelled from the mind at once. With regard to the first named, the extent of the reader's time can be the only limit to his reading; and the writer of these papers has deemed it advisable to allow of a wide selection, pointing out as briefly as possible the respective merits and demerits of the various works. As to any volume mentioned being beyond the reach of even the humblest student, it may be said that, at the present time, this is almost an impossibility. There are few institutes, clubs, libraries at which these cannot be obtained at the outlay of only a few shillings' yearly subscription.

Chapter IV.

THE ENGLISH POETS.

THE student's attention will now, for a short space, be turned aside from historical reading and its branches, and directed to a more pleasant, and not less useful field of literature—that cultivated by the poets. Now, the English poets are, take them for all in all, the finest in the world; and of all gifts or studied acquirements, that of poetry is the first. It follows then, that he that studies truly, and with sufficient intelligence and love, English poetry, betakes himself to the most exalted, beneficent, and humanizing study possible.

A definition of poetry is not here needed. It is articulate music, noble feeling put into words; it is worship, love, expression, the eloquence and very soul of language. It is so grand that nothing mean can live near it; and true poets are so great, too, that they are the only remaining prophets that we have on earth. The oracles are dumb else; but they remain, and speak to us and rule us from their graves. It has been said

that poetry is to philosophy what Sunday is to the week-days—a divine rest. Lord Bacon, whom few, save in the grandeur of his conceptions, will suspect of being a poet, said in his pithy style, "Poesy serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality, and to delectation;" that is, it brings and gives greatness of mind, goodness of manners, and the delight of life. "It has been to me," said Coleridge, who was indeed a poet, "its own exceeding great reward; it has soothed my afflictions, it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments, *and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.*" Here, then, you have from the lips of a true Christian the very effect of divine charity given to poetry. And Coleridge was right. All God's prophets, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Job, and Isaiah, were *poets*. The very heathen called the poet *Vates*, a prophet; nay, the Greek subtilty refined this even more, and, trying to find God in the dreams of their great poet, called him ὁ ποιητὴς, the Maker.

The cold Northern intellect of the ordinary Briton has somehow, since the times of the Puritans, depreciated poets and poetry. For this there may be two reasons, perhaps three. 1. He did not understand the essential nature of poetry, and thought it was jingling verse. 2. Poets have been hitherto rather poor.

> "Thou source of all my joy and all my woe,
> That found me poor at first, and keep'st me so,"

says Goldsmith; and, indeed, God, to keep the poet pure, has covered him with a divine mantle made of trial, poverty, and sensitiveness, so that the world touches him not too closely, and revenges itself by abusing what it cannot understand, and inventing all

sorts of calumnies about him. 3. Poets themselves have deserved now and then the harsh censure of the world, for the meaner sort of them have affected rough and uncouth ways, have been uncleanly and vicious in their courses, and have brought down upon themselves, like the foolish prophet, the lion to rend them, while he spared the ass that stood by. But the world has now grown to a better understanding of its true teachers.

The student who takes up poetry as a study should begin with a few early poets. Taking Chambers's course of "English Literature," which is an admirable work, or some other text-book, such as Scrimgeour's or Dr. Smith's, he should first ascertain which are those worthy to be known, and then procure their works; for to read all poets were but lost time, since there are so many inferior, and of lower growth, while the study of one of eminence is sufficient to set open a man's heart and enlarge his intellect.*

The first poem of any note in the language, and which is the most remarkable specimen of the class of verse that found general favour with the great body of the people at the time of its production, is the famous "Vision of Piers Ploughman," or, as it is given in the Latin title, "Visio Willielmi de Petro Plouhman," the Vision concerning Peter or Piers Ploughman. The construction of the poem is in alliterative verse with-

* I purposely omit reference to the early English metrical romances, and also to the early English metrical chronicles, as to touch upon these and other kindred matters would interfere with the arrangement and scope of the present work. It is possible that, on a future occasion, a supplementary volume supplying these omissions, and entering into matters of a technical and more advanced nature, may be offered to the student. It is to be *distinctly understood* that the present papers aim only at *being elementary.*

out rhyme, and the subject is a description sufferings and temptations of the soul in its through this world; but there is at the same t ning through it a severe and satirical attack viciousness of the clergy, and an exposure general corruption of manners of the perioc placed it at the head of the anti-clerical effusi culminated at length in the great work of (The authorship of the poem is generally asc Robert Langland, a monk, of whom it may there is little or nothing known in the way of] history. Much of the language that he uses similar to that of Chaucer. Mr. Thomas ' edition may be pointed out to the student as worthy and learned compilation. I extract the where Piers Ploughman is first brought under tice of the reader. A number of people ha induced by the advice of two symbolical per Hope and Repentance, to set forth in quest of T

A thousand of men tho[1]
Thrungen togeders,
Cried upward to Christ
And to his clean moder,
To have grace to go with them
Truthe to seek.
Ac[2] there was wight none so wise
The way thider couth,[3]
But blustreden[4] forth as beasts
Over bankes and hills;
Till late was and long
That they a leed[5] met,
Apparelled as a paynim
In pilgrimes wise.
He bar a burden y-bound
With a broad list,
In a with-wind wise[6]

[1] Then. [2] But. [3] Knew. [4] Wandered ign
[5] Person. [6] Withy-wand-wise.

Y-bounden about ;
A bowl and a bag
He bar by his side,
And hundred of ampuls[1]
On his hat setten,
Signs of Sinai
And shells of Galice,
And many a crouch[2] on his cloak
And keyes of Rome
And the Vernicle[3] before,
For[4] men shold know
And see by his signs
Whom he sought had.
The folk frayned[5] him first
Fro whennes he come :
"From Sinai," he said,
"And from our Lord's sepulchre :
In Bethlem and in Babiloyn,
I have been in both ;
In Armony[6] and in Alisandre,
In many other places.
Ye may see by my signs
That sitten on my hat,
That I have walked full wide
In weet and in dry,
And sought good saints
For my soul's health."
"Knowestow[7] aught a corsaint[8]
That men call Truth?
Coudestow[9] aught wissen[10] us the way
Where that wye[11] dwelleth?"
"Nay, so me God help,"
Said the gome[12] then,
I seigh never a palmer
With pike ne with scrip
Asken after him here
Till now in this place."
"Peter," quod a ploughman,
And put forth his head,
"I know him as kindly[13]
As clerk doth his bookes :
Conscience and kind wit

[1] Holy water and oil vessels. [2] Cross. [3] Miraculous picture of Christ. [4] So that. [5] Interrogated. [6] Armenia. [7] Knowest thou. [8] Relic. [9] Couldst. [10] Teach. [11] Man. [12] Man. [13] Naturally.

Kenned[1] me to his place,
And diden me suren him sickerly[2]
To serven him for ever,
Both to sow and to set
The while I swink[3] might.
I have been his follower
All this fifty winter,
Both y-sowen[4] his seed
And sued[5] his beasts,
Within and withouten
Waited his profit.
I dig and I delve,
I do that Truth hoteth :[6]
Sometime I sow
And sometime I thresh ;
In tailors craft and tinkers craft
What truth can devise ;
I weave and I wind
And do what Truth hoteth."

Contemporary with Petrarch in Italy, and, indeed, heralding the dawn of the intellectual day, was Geoffrey Chaucer (b. 1328, d. 1400), who is sometimes called the father of English poetry, and who, if properly understood, will be found to be one of the most compact, nervous, wise, and musical of English poets. He was a courtier, learned, thoughtful, and good, and attended the courts of Edward III. and Richard II., between the years 1360 and 1400. He was a man of very extensive knowledge, and determinately opposed to the priests, hating, with a fair, honest, open hatred, their ways, their hypocrisy, their domination, and avariciousness; and ready to herald, not the utter subversion of faith, but the Reformation, which after many years took place. Beyond all this, Chaucer is a painter of English character, equal to in generality, and surpassing in truth and finish, Mr. Dickens of our own

[1] Showed. [2] Securely. [3] Labour. [4] Sowed. [5] Tended. [6] Commandeth.

day. He is quite as amusing, and just as fresh; to an immeasurably higher degree, a poet,—and it is certain that Dickens is a true poet; besides, he is free from that terrible fault, the perpetual tendency to caricature, which that author possesses. In reading Chaucer, there comes as vividly before the mental eye as Mr. Wackford Squeers, and John Browdie, in "Nicholas Nickleby," or the exaggerated cockneys of "Pickwick," the honest, open-hearted, every-day Englishman of four hundred years ago. One can travel to Canterbury to perform a pilgrimage at the shrine of that cunning plotter-saint (?), Thomas-à-Becket; one can pray with the good parson, jest with the man who sold pardons from Rome and did not believe in them, drink with the Abbot, laugh with the Abbess, and sing love-songs to the Nun. There they all are, with the Miller, the Sompnour, the Man of Law, and the whole of the company, as much alive as any of Dickens's or Anthony Trollope's characters now. Chaucer is therefore, viewed in this light, an historical poet; and he is as superior to the ordinary historian as a troop of soldiers is to a regiment of wax-works. Read Hume's history of Richard II., and it is very possible that the reader will not be much impressed with it, although the historian has told it as well as any of his dry-as-dust brethren can; but read of the Pilgrimage to Canterbury, the meeting at the Tabard Inn, the bustling host who gets up to wake the company, and from whom emanates the idea of telling tales to pass the time of the journey pleasantly, in which whosoever acquits himself well, to him are the others to contribute for a supper at their journey's end, the trotting forth of the nags, the drunkenness of the "Coke," the foppishness of the Squire,

the purse-pride of the well-fed Abbot, and we feel in the midst of a living creation. In the Miller's Tale we can shut our eyes and see the parish clerk with his smart shoes, his well-combed hair, and his scented breath and linen, making love to the carpenter's wife. Even the animals painted by Chaucer seem to live. The pictures of the horse bolting away to the fen where the wild mares are, of the fox lying in wait, and of the cock strutting and crowing are just as accurately delineated as they could be by the closest observer of the present day; so vivid, so true, so real are they. A student will do well to supplement history with Chaucer. Moreover, he is unquestionably a first-class poet and lastly, he will be of rare use to the students of language, who will, in his pages, perceive how our words have changed, both in meaning and spelling, as well as in weight and accent. Here are a few lines from one of his poems to exhibit some of the changes, which in this instance are given with the Anglo-Saxon characters. The passage is from the "Pardoneres Tale," where the three "riotours"—or fast young men, as we should now call them—meeting an old man, ask disdainfully—

Why lyvest þou, so longe, in so gret age?
This oldé man 'gan looke on his visage
And saidé þus, For þat I cannot finde
A man þough þat I walkéd into Inde,
Neiþer in cité noon, ne in village,
That wol chaungé his youþé for myn age;
And þerfore moot I have myn agé stille
As longé tyme as it is Goddés wille.

Here, beside the Saxon characters, we find a termina and accented *é* before consonants, and the genitive case of a noun, God*des*, now only marked by our modern sign of ', thus—God's.

That woman was not without her champions in Chaucer's time is plain from the following extract, taken from the "Marchaundes Tale:"—

A wyf is Goddes gifte verrayly;
Al other maner giftes hardily,
As landes, rentes, pasture, or comune,
Or other moeblis, ben giftes of fortune,
That passen as a schadow on a wal.
But dred not, if I playnly telle schal,
A wyf wil last and in thin house endure,
Wel lenger than the last peradventure.
Mariage is a ful gret sacrament;
He which hath no wif I hold him schent;
He lyveth helples, and is al desolate
(I speke of folk in seculer estate).
And herken why, I say not this for nought,
That womman is for mannes help i-wrought.
The heighe God, whan he had Adam maked,
And saugh him al aloone body naked,
God of his grete goodnes sayde thanne,
Let us now make an helpe to this manne
Lyk to himself; and than he made Eve.
Her way ye see, and here may ye preve
That wyf is mannes help and his comfort,
His paradis terrestre and his desport.
So buxom[1] and so vertuous is sche,
Thay mosten neede lyve in unité;
O fleisch thay ben, and on blood as I gesse,
Have but oon hert in wele and in distresse.
A wyf? a! seinte Mery, *benedicite*,
How might a man have eny adversité
That hath a wyf? certes I can not say.
The joye that is betwixen hem tway
Ther may no tonge telle or herte think.
If he be pore, sche helpith him to swynk;
Sche kepith his good, and wastith never a del;
And al that her housbond list, sche likith it wel;
Sche saith nought oones nay, whan he saith ye;
Do this, saith he; al redy, sir, saith sche.
O blisful ordre, o wedlok precious!
Thou art so mery, and eke so vertuous,
And so comendid, and approved eek,
That every man that holt him worth a leek,

[1] Yielding, obedient.

Upon his bare knees ought al his lyf
Thanken his God, that him hath sent a wif,
Or pray to God oon him for to sende
To be with him unto his lyves ende.
For than his lyf is set in sikernesse;[1]
He may not be deceyved, as I gesse,
So that he worche after his wyfes red;[2]
Than may he boldely bere up his heed,
Thay ben so trewe and also so wyse.
For whiche, if thou wolt do as the wyse,
Do alway so, as womman wol the rede . . . .
A wif is keper of thin housbondrye:
Wel may the sike man wayle and wepe,
Ther as ther is no wyf the hous to kepe.
I warne the, if wisly thou wil wirche,
Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loveth his chirche;
If thou lovest thiself, thou lovest thy wyf.
No man hatith his fleissch, but in his lif
He fostrith it, and therfore warne I the
Cherissh thy wyf, or thou schalt never the
Housbond and wif, what so men jape or pleye,
Of worldly folk holden the righte weye;
Thay ben so knyt, ther may noon harm bytyde,
And nameliche upon the wyves side."

Here is the celebrated prayer with which Chaucer concludes his Canterbury Tales:—

"Now pray I to yow alle that heren this litel tretis or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that likes hem, that therof thay thanke oure Lord Jhesu Christ, of whom procedith alle wille and al goodnes; and if ther be eny thing that displesith hem, I pray hem that they arette it to the defaute of myn unconnyng, and not to my wille, that wolde fayn have sayd better if I hadde connyng; for the book saith, al that is writen for oure doctrine is writen. Wherfore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of God that ye pray for me, that God have mercy on me and forgeve me my giltes, and nameliche my translaciouns and of endityng in worldly vanitees, whiche I revoke in my retraccioun, as is the

[1] Security. [2] Advice.

book of Troyles, the book also of Fame, the book of twenty-five Ladies, the book of the Duchesses, the book of seint Valentines day, and of the Parliament of briddes, the Tales of Caunteirbury, alle thilke that sounen into synne, the book of the Leo, and many other bokes, if they were in mynde or remembraunce, and many a song and many a leccherous lay, of the which Crist for his grete mercy forgive me the synnes. But of the translacioun of Boce de consolacioun, and other bokes of consolacioun and of legend of lyves of seints, and Omelies, and moralitees, and devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and his moder, and alle the seintes in heven, bisekyng hem that thay fro hennysforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to biwayle my gultes, and to studien to the savacioun of my soule, and graunte me grace and space of verray repentaunce, penitence, confessioun, and satisfaccioun, to don in this present lif, thurgh the benigne grace of him that is king of kynges and prest of alle prestis, that bought us with his precious blood of his hert, so that I moote be oon of hem at the day of doom that schal be saved; *qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*"

And here is a quaint little address

TO HIS EMPTY PURSE.

To you, my purse, and to none other wight
Complaine I, for ye be my lady dere,
I am sorry now that ye be light,
For certes ye now make me heavy chere,
Me were as lefe laid upon a bere,
For which unto your mercie thus I crie,
Be heavie againe, or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this or it be night,
That I of you the blissful sowne may here,

Or see your colour like the sunne bright,
That of yelowness had never pere,
Ye be my life, ye be my hertes stere,
Queene of comfort and of good companie,
Be heavie againe, or els mote I die.

"Now purse that art to me my lives light,
And saviour, as downe in this world here,
Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
Sith that you woll not be my treasure,
For I am shave as nere as any frere,
But I pray unto your curtesie,
Be heavie again, or els mote I die.

A most admirable hand-book for the study of the English tongue at this period is "Specimens of Early English, A.D. 1250–1400," with grammatical introduction, notes, and a glossary, edited by R. Morris, Esq., and issued by the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Many of the minor poets, contemporaneously with and immediately subsequent to Chaucer, may be read with advantage by those who desire to become acquainted with the early forms of our language; and a book which will help the reader to much that he may want in this portion of his studies, is the "Select Works of British Poets, from Chaucer to Ben Jonson," edited by Robert Southey.

I will now proceed to notice, as briefly as possible, a few of the minor poets to whom I have previously referred the student.

Gower (1325-1408), the "moral Gower," as Chaucer addressed him, and the epithet has stuck to him, is the author of a triad of celebrated poetical pieces: one in French, the "Speculum Amantis," said to be lost; another in Latin, the "Vox Clamantis;" and the third, and obviously the most familiar, in English, the "Confessio Amantis." As this latter is composed of a series of edifying tales, carried through some 30,000

verses, the reader will not be far wrong if he come to the conclusion that their perusal would require something more than an ordinary share of human endurance. John Barbour (birth unknown, died about 1395) was another well-known poet contemporary with Chaucer. He was a Scotchman, and the author of the poem entitled "The Bruce." Of his personal history there is little known. His poem is characterized by great narrative and descriptive powers, and some of his battle-pieces have an animation that might almost be called Homeric.

The author (circa 1460-1529) of "The Boke of Philip Sparow" deserves something more than a passing notice; for there is little of the poetry of the reign of Henry VII. that has such an amount of originality and freshness about it as that of John Skelton. That the poet was largely appreciated in his day is evident from the fact that he was appointed tutor to the young prince, Henry VIII., and met with considerable patronage from Cardinal Wolsey. But Skelton, afflicted with a satirical temper, made some imprudent attacks upon the great cardinal—the "sank royal [blood royal] that was cast out of a butcher's stall," as he designated him—through which he had to fly for refuge to the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey, where he died in 1529. Besides his "Philip Sparow," Skelton was the author of another "litle boke," "Colyn Clout," and of a drama in rhyme, extending to over 2,500 verses. His works have been edited with great skill and acumen by the Rev. Alexander Dyce. The following is an extract from his "Philip Sparow," in praise of his mistress, Lady Jane Somerset:—

How shall I reporte
Al the godly sort
Of her fetures cleere
That hath none earthly peere?
Her favoure of her face,
Ennewed with al grace,
Confort, pleasure, and solace
Mine hart doth so enbrace,
And so hath rauished me
Her to behold and se,
That in wordes playne
I cannot me refrayne
To loke to her agayne.
Alas! what shoulde I fayne,
It were a plesaunte payne
With her aye to remayne.

Her eyen gray and stepe
Causeth myne harte to leepe;
With her browes bente
She maye wel represente
Fayre Lucres, as I weene,
Or els fayre Polexene;
Or els Caliope
Or els Penolope:
For thys moste goodly floure,
This blossome of freshe coloure
So Jupiter me succour
She florisheth new and new
In beauty and vertue;
Hac claritate gemina,
O gloriosa fœmina,
Memor esto verbi tui servo tuo,
Servus tuus sum ego.

The Indy saphyre blewe,
Her vaynes doth ennew;
The orient pearle so cleare
The witnes of her lere;
The lusty ruby ruddes
Resemble the rose buddes;
Her lippes soft and mery
Emblomed like the chery
It were an heavenly blysse
Her sugred mouthe to kysse . . . .
She is the violet
The daisy delectable
The columbine commendable

This ielofer amiable;
This moste goodly floure
This blossome of freshe coloure
So Jupiter me succoure
She florysheth new and new
In beauty and vertue;
Hac claritate gemina,
O gloriosa fœmina,
Bonitatem fecisti cum servo tuo domina,
Et ex præcordiis sonant præconia."

Surrey (1517-1547) and Wyatt (1503-1541) were other two poets of the reign of Henry VIII., to the former of whom is ascribed the introduction of blank verse and of the sonnet into our language, and who will be remembered as of the number of those who fell victims to the tyrannical cruelty of that monarch. The writings of these poets are marked by much refinement and sentiment, and are antique only in spelling. Here is one of Surrey's sonnets:—

DESCRIPTION OF SPRING.

WHEREIN ECHE THING RENEWES SAVE ONELY THE LOVER.

The soote season, that bud and blome forth brings,
With grene hath clad the hill, and eke the vale:
The nightingale with fethers new she sings:
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale:
Somer is come, for every spray now springs:
The hart hath hong his old hed on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coate he flings:
The fishes flete with new repaired scale:
The adder all her slough away she flings;
The swift swalow pursueth the flies smale:
The busy bee her hony now she mings,
Winter is worne, that was the flowers bale.
And thus I se among these pleasant things
Eche care decayes; and yet my sorow springs.

Thomas Tusser (1523-1580), the British Varro, as Warton has styled him, with his quaint proverbial-like rhymed utterances, on agricultural and rural life in

general, in his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry," may be pointed out to the student as a thoroughly original and vigorous writer in his peculiar and unapproached line; but it is very possible that the nature of his subject and his extremely odd way of putting it will limit the number of his readers. It is to be said, however, that Tusser's style is most unaffected and facile. He was also the author of a number of miscellaneous pieces.

The critical reader will perhaps miss the names of a few other important minor poets, but the present survey does not profess to be an exhaustive one: here, therefore, I will close my short account of the poets who flourished before the so-called Elizabethan* period properly begins—a period distinguished by the rise of two such bright luminaries as Spenser and Shakespeare.

* The term "Elizabethan" is commonly, though somewhat incorrectly, applied to the whole of the literature of the reign of Elizabeth and of the first James and Charles.

Chapter V.

THE ENGLISH POETS.

(*Continued.*)

CHAUCER, the "milky fountain, clear strand, and rose rial," or royal, as Gawen Douglas describes him, whose works should be read and studied, not only for their beauty but for the great lessons that they teach, is of an entirely different class from those poets whom modern young men delight to honour; who are not the didactic, explanatory poets, but those whose imagination is boundless, and who do not relate things which have happened or can happen to man—do not teach by the example of human teachings, but who lead you into a kingdom of their own, upon the highest top (so they say) of Parnassus; who invent, symbolize, dress up realities, in forms utterly imaginative; and who are scarcely of this world, so much as of the world of Mind or Imagination.

Now, there are many who call this last poetry, and the other of which we have been treating, merely rhyme. But a body can be imperfect without its limbs or trunk as well *as without its* head; and if it be conceded that

the highest boundary of poetry is fancy, then the lower and most permanent must be philosophical good sense. He who appreciates only one kind of poetry is imperfect. Let us do as did Charles Lamb—thank God for a catholic (universal) taste, which will let us ascend the highest scale, and yet run down to the lowest. All great poets have been able to do this. Shakespeare, as we know, could create such unknown beings as Puck, Caliban, the Witches, Ariel, and yet portray Dogberry, Verges, and Doll Tearsheet.

Shakespeare is the plainest, most direct, and simplest writer of all. He has more of the common sense of prose in his deepest poetry than any poet; and yet he well describes the "fine frenzy" in which the creations of those to whom the reader is now about to be introduced had birth. He says that at such times

> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.

It is this creation of something just as tangible indeed as the names of history, that the imaginative poet claims as his highest performance. And in this he is something of the dramatist, for he forms an illusion or momentary belief in that which is utterly unreal; and thereby he satisfies the mind: for, as Hallam says, "the mind requires an objective possibility, a capacity for real existence, not only in all the separate portions of the imagined story, but in their relationship and coherency to the common whole."

Spenser is the great allegorical poet of England; but

there are others who preceded and followed him, whom we shall class with him, occasionally infringing the rule of strict chronological order; for true poets are not of an age, but for all time. Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1536-1608), appears to have first introduced into England this allegorical writing. His great narrative poem, "The Mirrour for Magistrates," by which he seems to have meant a lesson to those that govern, is said to have been suggested by a Latin work of Boccaccio's, entitled, "The Fall of Princes," a translation of which, in verse, had been published some time before by Lydgate. The scene of the poem he lays in hell, as did Dante, and, under the guidance of Sorrow, beholds the sufferings and relates the history of the people placed there. This visionary style of poem will be found to crop up again and again as occasion demands it. Southey, when he wished to flatter the son, made an apotheosis of the dead George III., and called it the "Vision of Judgment;" in the close of which, with great force and abundantly fine imagery, he fairly sends the king to heaven. Byron, to ridicule Southey, has a "Vision of Judgment," too, abundantly profane—laughing, with the scepticism of Voltaire and the mockery of Tom Paine, at the belief in future reward and punishment. Thomas Cooper—a living poet, much neglected, but fully worthy to be mentioned with these—a learned, self-taught working man, of great genius, has written the "Purgatory of Suicides;" in which he, with fine poetic imagery and splendid declamation, and an amount of learning which shows the author's application and acquirements, illustrates the history of self-killers, from Judas Iscariot, and even before him, *to Lord Castlereagh.* To return to Sack-

ville, who is to be mentioned with honour, not onl for his splendid imagery, but for his inventive adapta tion, his object is to make all the great persons i English history who have borne rule and been magi trates, and whose judicial career had been more or les unfortunate, pass in review and tell their story, as warning to existing rulers. Sackville was unable t carry out the original conception of his work, and ha to relinquish it to other and less worthy hands; bu his own contributions to it—the "Induction," and th "Complaint of Henry Duke of Buckingham"—bea unmistakeable evidences of a great genius, and alon have saved the poem from the oblivion to which would otherwise have been consigned.

Here is a specimen of Sackville's style, taken fro the "Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham:"—

Mydnyght was cum, and every vitall thing
With swete sound slepe theyr weary lyms did rest:
The beastes were still, the lytle byrdes that syng
Nowe sweetely slept besides theyr mothers brest,
The olde and all were shrowded in theyr nest.
The waters calme, the cruel seas did ceas,
The wuds, the fyeldes, and all thinges held theyr peace.

The golden stars wer whyrlde amyd thyer race,
And on the earth did laugh with twinkling lyght,
When eche thing nestled in his restyng place,
Forgat dayes payne with pleasure of the nyght:
The hare had not the greedy houndes in sight,
The fearfull dear of death stood not in doubt,
The partrydge dre[m]pt not of the falcon's foot.

The ougly beare nowe myndeth not the stake,
Nor howe the cruell mastyves do him tear;
The stag lay still unroused from the brake,
The fomy boar feard not the hunters spear.
All thing was still in desert, bush, and brear,
With quyet heart now from their travailes rest,
Soundly they slept in midst of all their rest [nest?].

It is generally admitted that Sackville, who lived through the troublous reigns of Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth, and died at a good old age, without being ruined or beheaded—a rare thing for a minister in those days—had the merit of not only introducing the first regular tragedy into our language, but of inspiring Edmund Spenser. The last-named great poet is one of the landmarks of our literary history. It is easy enough, said Pope, to mark them out—"Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, are the great landmarks for it." Of course we have others now—Pope himself, Cowper, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson; and, of the whole number, perhaps the least read and the oftenest talked of is Edmund Spenser; of whom, said Gibbon, "the noble family of Spenser should be so proud, that they should consider him the first jewel in their coronet."

Spenser was a gentleman, a native, like Chaucer and Milton, of London—"merry London," as he himself styles it, "my most kindly nurse." He was born, if we may take Oldys as an authority, at East Smithfield, about 1552; but that his parents were poor is to be conjectured, because in those days, when education was cheaper, and more open to all classes, he was entered as a sizar—the lowest class of students—at Pembroke College, Cambridge, in May, 1569, and thereat he took his degree of M. A. in 1576. Coming to London, he was introduced to Sir Philip Sidney by Gabriel Harvey, "one of the very diamonds," said Harvey, "of her Majesty's court."

In 1579, "E. K." (Edward Kirke) published, with comments, Spenser's "Shepheards Calendar," dedicated to Sidney, with whom he read and talked of Plato in

the rural shades of Penshurst. Sidney's father was in high employ in Ireland; and his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, seems to have befriended Spenser, who for ten long years spent his time uselessly at court. Lord Grey of Wilton being sent as Lord Deputy to Ireland, Spenser went with him as his secretary, and in June 1586 had a grant of 3,028 acres in the county of Cork; and, residence being obligatory, he took up his abode at Kilcolman Castle, near Doneraile, where he wrote most of his "Faerie Queene." Here Raleigh, the "Shepherd of the Ocean" visited him, and, the first three books of the poem being completed, persuaded him to go to London and publish them; and in 1589-90 they appeared, heralded by a letter to Raleigh, explaining the "continued allegory and dark conceit." His aim was, he said, to fashion the ideal of a gentleman or noble person, and he had chosen Prince Arthur as the hero. Having beheld the Faerie Queene in a vision, Prince Arthur goes in quest of her. The Faerie Queene holding her annual feast for twelve days, each day is signalized by the adventures of a knight; the first of the Red Cross Knight, signifying Holiness; the second, Sir Guyon, or Temperance; the third, a lady knight, Britomartis, or Chastity. These are personifications of abstract virtues; and to them are added real personages, symbolized thus:—Gloriana and Belphœbe, the huntress, are Queen Elizabeth; Envy is Mary Queen of Scotland; Arthegal, or Justice, is Lord de Grey and Wilton. Such a confusion is entailed by this symbolical writing, that few readers have either the capacity thoroughly to understand or the patience to read the poem, except in detached portions, for its *beauty;* but those who do read it will be amply re-

warded. The first stanzas are so admirably expressed, so artistically written, and are so full of beautiful thoughts, that they will insensibly lead the truly appreciative student further on. They resemble, in the nobility of thought that they breathe, Sidney's "Arcadia;" and the poem is indeed not unlike that marvellous prose poem in intention. Modern readers who do not know the "Faerie Queene," will find that, in talk of jousts, tournaments, and the deeds of errant knights, who go abroad in the world to rescue oppressed damsels, to make that which was wrong right, and by force of arms to do the work of gentleness and peace, the poem is not very much unlike the "Idylls of the King," by Tennyson. But Spenser is longer, more full of symbol, less direct, and therefore, to many, perhaps, more wearisome. Now-a-days, and notwithstanding that our best book, the Bible, is full of Eastern imagery, we are grown averse to symbolic writing. We, for instance, only look upon Spenser's description of the Wedding of the Medway and the Thames with curiosity, and wonder that any relic of pagan mythology could have lasted so long. We cannot with patience entertain the idea of a river being married, attended by its friends. But we must remember the fashion of the times, the imagery of the poems, the images in the churches, and the fashion of personifying inanimate objects as well as qualities, which then obtained. This symbolism once mastered, the poem will of itself be found to merit all the praise lavished on it. The thoughts are so elevated, the art so great, that it seems impossible that a man can read it and not be nobler and better for having done so. *More than this: every* now and then Spenser rises into

such a felicity of expression, such a happy combina of words—a *curiosa felicitas*, most truly—that the once heard, charm us for ever. The reader will ceive more than one such line in this stanza, des tive of Una or Innocence :—

> One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome waye,
> From her unhastie beast she did alight,
> And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
> In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight;
> From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
> And layd her stole aside: her angels face,
> As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
> And made a sunshine in the shady place:
> Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

A lion rushes from the wood on her; but overc by her beauty—"O how can beauty master the r strong"—he, instead of tearing her, licks her feet guards her on her way. Here we have again sym ism; and every now and then, in the narrativ reminiscence of classical lore, and much observa from Spenser himself; so that a self-educator will a great deal out of the poem, besides the sweet s faction of pure and noble thoughts. Spenser publis six books; each book has twelve cantos, each c from fifty to sixty stanzas like that given above. Tl are also beyond these "Two Cantos of Mutabili containing together seventy-one stanzas, and wl would appear to have been intended to fall under head of the legend of Constancy. So that the poe a long one. It was never completed; nor did the p reap a great reward. His castle was attacked by insurgent Irish in 1598, plundered and burnt—witl as some surmise, but on slight grounds, the conclus of the "Faerie Queene." The poet and his v *escaped,* but an infant child perished in the flar

Broken-hearted and beggared, the poet reached London, and died (1599,) in about three months after, in King Street, Westminster, in great poverty. As Chaucer has been emphatically termed "the poet of objects," Spenser, with equal happiness, has been called "the poet of pictures."

The student cannot, perhaps, have a better specimen of Spenser's style than the following description of the "Mother of Dissension:"—

Her name was Ate, mother of debate
And all dissention, which doth dayly grow
Amongst fraile men, that many a publike state
And many a private oft doth overthrow.
Her false Duessa, who full well did know
To be most fit to trouble noble knights
Which hunt for honor, raised from below
Out of the dwellings of the damned sprights,
Where she in darkness wastes her cursed daies and nights.

Hard by the gates of hell her dwelling is;
There, whereas all the plagues and harmes abound
Which punish wicked men that walke amisse:
It is a darksome delve farre under ground,
With thornes and barren brakes environd round,
That none the way may easily out win:
Yet many waies to enter may be found,
But none to issue forth when one is in;
For discord harder is to end then to begin.

And all within the riven walls were hung
With ragged monuments of times forepast,
All which the sad effects of discord sung:
There were rent robes and broken scepters plast;
Altars defyld, and holy things defast;
Disshivered speares, and shieldes ytorne in twaine;
Great cities ransackt, and strong castles rast;
Nations captived, and huge armies slaine:
Of all which ruines there some relicks did remaine.

There was the signe of antique Babylon;
Of fatall Thebes; of Rome that raigned long;
Of sacred Salem; and sad Ilion,
For memorie of which on high there hong

The golden apple, cause of all their wrong,
For which the three faire goddesses did strive :
There also was the name of Nimrod strong ;
Of Alexander, and his princes five
Which shar'd to them the spoiles that he had got alive.

And there the relicks of the drunken fray,
The which amongst the Lapithees befell ;
And of the bloodie feast, which sent away
So many Centaures drunken soules to hell,
That under great Alcides furie fell ;
And of the dreadful discord which did drive
The noble Argonauts to outrage fell ;
That each of life sought others to deprive,
All mindless of the Golden Fleece, which made them str

And eke of private persons many moe,[1]
That were too long a worke to count them all ;
Some, of sworne friends that did their faith forgoe ;
Some, of borne brethren prov'd unnaturall ;
Some, of deare lovers foes perpetuall :
Witnesse their broken bandes there to be seene,
Their girlonds rent, their bowres despoyled all ;
The moniments whereof there byding beene,
As plaine as at the first when they were fresh and greene.

Such was her house within ; but all without
The barren ground was full of wicked weedes,
Which she her selfe had sowen all about,
Now growen great, at first of little seedes,
The seedes of evill wordes and factious deedes ;
Which when to ripenesse due they growen arre,
Bring forth an infinite increase, that breedes
Tumultuous trouble and contentious jarre,
The which most often end in bloudshed and in warre.

And those same cursed seedes do also serve
To her for bread, and yeeld her living food ;
For life it is to her when others sterve
Through mischievous debate and deadly feood,[2]
That she may sucke their life and drinke their blood,
With which she from her childhood had bene fed,
For she at first was borne of hellish brood,
And by infernall furies nourished ;
That by her monstrous shape might easily be red.

[1] re. [2] Feud.

Her face most fowle and filthy was to see,
With squinted eyes contrarie wayes intended,
And loathly mouth, unmeete a mouth to bee,
That nought but gall and venim comprehended,
And wicked wordes that God and man offended.
Her lying tongue was in two parts divided,
And both the parts did speake, and both contended;
And as her tongue so was her hart discided,[1]
That never thoght one thing, but doubly stil was guided.

Als as she double spake, so heard she double,
With matchlesse eares deformed and distort,
Fild with false rumors and seditious trouble,
Bred in assemblies of the vulgar sort,
That still are led with every light report:
And as her eares, so eke her feet were odde
And much unlike; th' one long, the other short,
And both misplast; that, when th' one forward yode,[2]
The other backe retired and contrarie trode.

Likewise unequall were her handés twaine;
That one did reach the other pusht away;
That one did make the other mard againe,
And sought to bring all things unto decay;
Whereby great riches, gather'd manie a day,
She in short space did often bring to nought,
And their possessours often did dismay:
For all her studie was, and all her thought,
How she might overthrow the things that Concord wrought.

So much her malice did her might surpas,
That even th' Almightie selfe she did maligne,
Because to man so mercifull he was,
And unto all his creatures so benigne,
Sith[3] she her selfe was of his grace indigne;
For all this worlds faire workmanship she tride
Unto his last confusion to bring,
And that great golden chaine quite to divide,
With which it blessed Concord hath together tide.

I cannot refrain from giving one of Spenser's exquite sonnets:—

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves, and washéd it away:
Agayne I wrote it with a second hand;

[1] *Cleft in two.* [2] Went. [3] Since.

But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray
"Vayne man!" said she, "that doest in vaine a
A mortall thing so to immortalize;
For I my selfe shall lyke to this decay,
And eek my name bee wyped out lykewize;"
"Not so," quod I; "let baser things devize
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the hevens wryte your glorious name;
Where, when as death shall all the world subc
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

William Warner (1558-1609), author of "Albic
land;" Samuel Daniel (1562-1619), a Somers
Michael Drayton (1563-1631), a Warwickshi
author of the "Polyolbion;" Edward Faire
1632), translator of Tasso's "Jerusalem Deli
William Shakespeare (1564-1616), as author of
and Adonis;" Sir John Harrington (circa 156
translator of Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso;" Sir
Fanshawe (1607-66), translator of the "Pasto
of Guarini; William Drummond (1585-1669); S
Davies (1570-1626), author of "Nosce Tei
Dr. John Donne (1573-1631); George Chapma
1634), translator of the "Iliad and Odyssey;"
Joseph Hall (1574-1656); George Wither (158
Giles and Phineas Fletcher (circa 1582-1650);
Browne (1590-1645), author of "Britannia's Pas
Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639); Francis Quarle
1644); George Herbert (1593-1632), and Robe
rick (1591-1674), to each of whom the stud
presently be introduced, are poets of this age,
their works, present the student with bits of
fancy, noble and manly imaginings, wholesome
ings of the spirit, and an English airiness an
ment, which is a capital infusion to be taken
melancholy, too much love of gold, or too grea

the world. For there are whole continents of difference between the huckstering, peddling spirit of the present day, when people cheapen and detract from every noble thing, and the spirit of these poets.

"This our whole island, anciently called Britain, but more anciently Albion, presently containing two kingdoms, England and Scotland, is cause (right honourable) that, to distinguish the former, whose only occurrents I abridge from our history, I entitle this my book 'Albion's England.'" This is Warner's explanation of the title of his book. The poem met with an unusual share of popularity on its appearance, which is certainly not incomprehensible; for, to the readers of that day, it must have possessed attractions of a kind in which it had no rival. It is full of amusing narratives and legends, related in language both lucid and flowing. In the poem there occurs the following slight reference to tobacco. Speaking of the smoke, he says:—

> I saw it did proceed from nostrils and from throats
> Of ladies, lords, and silly grooms, not burning skins nor coats.
> Great Belsabub! thought I, can all spit fire as well as thine?
> Or where am I? It cannot be under the torrid line?

Two or three favourable specimens of Warner may be seen in Percy's "Reliques."

Samuel Daniel was the author of a number of sonnets, of an account of the "Civil Wars between the Two Houses of York and Lancaster," of "Musophilus," "A Defence of Learning," and a few plays. Much of his poetry is marked by quiet reflectiveness and occasional eloquence, while other portions cannot but be considered tedious. Part of his life was spent at Court, from the capricious influences of which he eventually retired to the quieter scenes of a country life.

The list of poets just named will now be placed before the student, necessarily in a brief manner, but in such fashion, it is hoped, as will induce him to cultivate a much larger acquaintance.

Michael Drayton sings out like a free and gladsome lark on a sunshiny morning, mounting up to heaven and pouring out to God full-throated praise, that his England is so free and beautiful. Thus he begins:—

> Of Albion's glorious isle, the wonders while I write,
> The sundry varying soils, the pleasures infinite,
> Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expels the heat,
> The calms too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great;
> Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong,
> The Summer not too short, the Winter not too long.

Drayton with great knowledge, learning, and care, describes all England. The "Polyolbion" is indeed unlike any poem ever written; it is full of symbolism, and yet studded with historical and antiquarian knowledge. There is not a field nor a mountain that he has not spoken of from Cornwall to Northumberland, hardly a stream or a bay that he has passed over; and all these have their legends, told with the spirit of Macaulay, and in the stanza which he adopted.

Drayton was buried in Westminster Abbey; and the Countess of Dorset, who had so honoured Spenser and "well-languaged" Daniel—for in those days our Queen and great people honoured literature as they now neglect it—raised a monument to him, and Ben Jonson wrote an epitaph on him, declaring that when the stone should moulder and decay, and cease to be the treasurer of his name—

> His name, that cannot fade, shall be
> An everlasting monument to thee.

Drayton's "Polyolbion" is hardly suited for extract;

but here are the opening verses of his "Nymphidia," a very sprightly and fanciful little poem :—

Old Chaucer doth of Topas tell,
Mad Rablais of Pantagruel,
A later third of Dowsabel,
With such poor trifles playing :
Others the like have labour'd at,
Some of this thing, and some of that,
And many of they know not what,
But that they must be saying.

Another sort there be, that will
Be talking of the fairies still,
Nor never can they have their fill,
As they were wedded to them :
No tales of them their thirst can slake,
So much delight therein they take,
And some strange things they fain would make,
Knew they the way to do them.

Then since no Muse hath been so bold
Or of the later or the old,
Those elvish secrets to unfold,
Which lie from other's reading,
My active Muse to light shall bring
The court of that proud fairy king,
And tell there of the revelling:
Jove prosper my proceeding.

And thou, Nymphidia, gentle fay,
Which meeting me upon the way,
These secrets didst to me bewray
Which now I am in telling :
My pretty light fantastic maid,
I here invoke to thee my aid,
That I may speak what thou hast said,
In numbers smoothly swelling."

And here is one of the same poet's sonnets :—

Since there's no help, come let us kiss, and part :
Nay, I have done ; you get no more of me ;
And I am glad—yea, glad with all my heart—
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows ;
And when we meet at any time again
Be it not seen in either of our brows

That we one jot of former love retain.
Now, at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion, speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling at his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes—
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

Shakespeare's sonnets and "Venus and Adonis," and "Lucrece" are fanciful poems, very worthy to be read. At one time it was the fashion to pass them by with disdain; Steevens thought them "stuff"; Johnson not great poems. More recently, for the last five-and-thirty years or more, some of our leading critics incline to look upon them as autobiographical poems. Happily we know next to nothing of Shakespeare's life, save that it was not quite so miserable as that of some other poets. The student who proceeds on the plan here presented to him will only care to thank God that men so great, so good, so pure and elevated in their books, have lived. He will know when he meets with a noble thought, that he who expresses it must have been noble at the time at least, and was so probably all his life. He will read the imaginative poets to enlarge his ideas, to open to him the realms of fancy, and to show him that the material world is not all that we have inherited. He will read the historic and dramatic poets for a knowledge of character, and for the wonderful insight which they have into the human breast. He will enjoy the didactic, reflective, and satiric poets for their true and noble morality, and the extraordinary power they have of putting a truth, which remains in the mind for ever, into a verse of a few syllables. And this course will especially open *his mind* and heart, and improve him. He can no

longer be considered ignorant or uncultivated, if he has read carefully but a tithe of what has been placed before him; he must find that his mind has expanded, and that he loves mankind more, Nature more, and himself less. He must not be ungrateful to the poets, the oldest and ablest teachers, nor imagine them to be mere triflers, but wise and keen-sighted manly men, and womanly women, who have felt and suffered, and have become the better for their suffering; who having a greater insight into the soul, and a brighter knowledge of what should be, are more pained to see what is. These noble teachers he will love, and think, with a humble modern, that, in regard to their abundant use to mankind,—

> To have been a laggard in the van
> Of those who nobly think and sing,
> Is something of more keen delight
> Than being a crown'd and sceptred king.

To Edward Fairefax, Sir John Harrington, and Sir Richard Fanshawe are due the praise of having produced noble English versions of these great Italian poets, Tasso, Ariosto, and Guarini. To Fanshawe also belongs the merit of translating Camoen's "Lusiad." Fairefax's "Godfrey of Bulloigne" is one of the most delightful books the reader can take up. Harrington's "Orlando" does not reach so high a level, although it contains many noble passages, and is enriched with interesting notes. Fanshawe's "Pastor Fido" has not merited the neglect it has received; for it is an able rendering of a most fascinating poem. These three translators were also the authors of several original pieces; and to Fanshawe belongs the additional *credit of* having put into Latin verse the

"Faithful Shepherdess" of Beaumont and Fletcher. Here is an extract from Fairefax's "Godfrey of Bulloigne"—the description of the ambassadors before Godfrey, a magnificent passage:—

Thus answered Godfrey, and his calm reply
Stung to the quick Argantes' heart of pride;
He did not veil it, but, approaching nigh,
With quivering lips, in proud assumption cried:
"Who will not peace, the battle can abide!
Ne'er was there penury of risk or woe
To those whose rashness dared to be defied;
Too well a warlike spirit wilt thou show,
If the fair gifts we bring thou carest to forego!"

He took his mantle by the skirt; he curved
As to an urn the implicated fold,
And, holding it on high, his language nerved
With angrier eye and mal'ice uncontroll'd:
"Ho! thou contemner of strong Fate, behold!
I bring thee in this urn both war and peace:
Make now thy choice, and quickly be it told—
War, peace or war; which ever most may please—
What more thou wouldst demand, thine own right hand must seize!"

At his fierce gesture and disdainful voice
Inflamed, from all their seats the barons sprung;
They waited not to hear their leader's choice,
"War! war!" they cried, with simultaneous tongue;
He far abroad the fatal mantle flung,
And shook it in their teeth: "Then evermore
Take mortal war!" he cried: so wildly rung
The words, it seemed the adamantine door
Which awful Janus keeps flew open to the roar:

It seem'd that from the shaking of the fold
Gigantic Fury and wild Discord flew;
That in his frightful eyes they might behold
Megara and Alecto rise to view;
So stood, perchance, the giant when he drew
To Shinaär's plain his nations, to defy
The God of heaven, and, as the huge tower grew
Upward from earth, perchance with such an eye
He watch'd it pass the clouds, and threat the starry sky.

Fairefax was also the author of a number of eclogues.

Continuing our rapid survey, we come to William Drummond of Hawthornden, an elegant and graceful poetical writer of the time of James I. He was the friend and contemporary of Ben Jonson. To Drummond we are indebted for some most pleasing and well-turned sonnets, and a few prose pieces. In these latter he would seem to have adopted Sir Philip Sidney as his model. The following is one of Drummond's exquisite sonnets:—

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought
In time's great periods shall return to nought;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
With toil of sprite, which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few or none are sought;
That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.
I know frail beauty's like the purple flow'r,
To which one morn oft birth and death affords;
That love a jarring is of minds' accords,
Where sense and will bring under reason's power;
Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
But that, alas, I both must write and love.

Dr. John Donne is another of the chief poets of the James' era. He is the author of a number of songs and sonnets, epistles and satires. Of these latter Pope has given us a version in modern language. Bishop Joseph Hall more properly comes under the head of "Prose Writers;" but his satires cannot escape mention. They were published under the title of "Virgidemiarum," and treat mainly of the peculiarities and weaknesses of the human character. They are written with much boldness and freedom.

At a time when the reading world is very much divided in its estimate of the requirements of a Homeric *translator,* a careful perusal of the translation

of the Iliad and Odyssey, by George Chapman, will amply repay the student. To Chapman is due the praise of preserving in English many fine compound epithets of his original, such as "silver-footed," "high-welled," "cloud-compelling," which are too often lost in the performances of later translators. The translation itself is full of fire and boldness; and, although its occasional ruggedness jars upon the ears of those who admire the polished and refined verses of Pope, it is certain that Chapman approaches in matter and manner more nearly to the spirit of the Greek poet. He was also the author of a number of dramatic pieces, the best of which perhaps is "Bussy d'Ambois." Here is a specimen of his version of the Iliad, Achilles arming, at the close of the nineteenth book:—

The host set forth, and pour'd his steel waves far out of the fleet.
And as from air the frosty north wind blows a cold thick sleet
That dazzles eyes, flakes after flakes incessantly descending,
So thick helms, curets, ashen darts, and round shields, never ending,
Flow'd from the navy's hollow womb. Their splendours gave Heaven's eye
His beams again. Earth laugh'd to see her face so like the sky;
Arms shined so hot, and she such clouds made with the dust she cast,
She thunder'd, feet of men and horse importuned her so fast.
In midst of all divine Achilles his fair person arm'd,
His teeth gnash'd as he stood, his eyes so full of fire they warm'd,
Unsuffered[1] grief and anger at the Trojans so combined.
His greaves first used, his goodly curets on his bosom shined,
His sword, his shield that cast a brightness from it like the moon.
And as from sea sailors discern a harmful fire let run
By herdsmen's faults, till all their stall flies up in wrastling flames,
Which being on hills is seen far off, but being alone, none came

[1] Insufferable.

To give it quench, at shore no neighbours, and at sea their friends
Driven off with tempests; such a fire from his bright shield extends
His ominous radiance, and in heaven impress'd his fervent blaze.
His crested helmet, grave and high, had next triumphant place
On his curl'd head, and like a star it cast a spurry ray,
About which a bright thicken'd bush of golden hair did play,
Which Vulcan forged him for his plume. Thus complete arm'd, he tried
How fit they were, and if his motion could with ease abide
Their brave instruction; and, so far they were from hindering it,
That to it they were nimble wings, and made so light his spirit,
That from the earth the princely captain they took up to air.

Then from his armoury he drew his lance, his father's spear,
Huge, weighty, firm, that not a Greek but he himself alone
Knew how to shake; it grew upon the mountain Pelion,
From whose height Chiron hew'd it for his sire, and fatal 'twas
To great-soul'd men, of Peleus and Pelion, surnamed Pelias.

Then from the stable their bright horse,[1] Automedon, withdraws,
And Alcymus; put poitrils[2] on, and cast upon their jaws
Their bridles, hurling back the reins, and hung them on the seat.
The fair scourge then Automedon takes up, and up doth get
To guide the horse. The fight's seat last Achilles took behind,
Who looked so arm'd as if the sun, there fallen from heaven, had shined,
And terribly thus charged his steeds: "Xanthus and Balius,
Seed of the Harpy, in the charge ye undertake of us,
Discharge it not as when Patroclus ye left dead in field,
But, when with blood, for this day's fast observed, revenge shall yield
Our heart satiety, bring us off." Thus, since Achilles spake
As if his awed steeds understood, 'twas Juno's will to make
Vocal the palate of the one, who shaking his fair head
(Which, in his mane, let fall to earth, he almost buried),
Thus Xanthus spake: "Ablest Achilles, now, at least, our care
Shall bring thee off; but not far hence the fatal minutes are
Of thy grave ruin. Nor shall we be then to be reproved,
But mightiest Fate, and the great God. Nor was thy best beloved
Spoil'd so of arms by our slow pace, or courage's impair;
The best of gods, Latona's son, that wears the golden hair,

[1] *i. e.*, horses. [2] breast-harness.

Gave him his death's wound, though the grace he gave to He
tor's hand.
We, like the spirit of the west that all spirits can command
For power of wing, could run him off; but thou thyself must
So fate ordains, God and a man must give him overthrow."

This said, the Furies stopped his voice. Achilles, far in rag
Thus answered him: "It fits not thee thus proudly to presag
My overthrow. I know myself it is my fate to fall
Thus far from Phthia; yet that fate shall fail to vent her gall
Till mine vent thousands." These words used, he fell to hor
deeds,
Gave dreadful signal, and forthright made fly his one-hoof'd
steeds.

It is somewhat difficult to tell the student wl may be considered the chief production of Geo Wither. His "Shepheards' Hunting" is generally as ciated with his name. But he was the author of m than a hundred works besides, the collection togetl of which no one has as yet been found sufficiently c rageous to undertake. Very many of these productic are of a political nature. He was also the author c number of religious pieces, of some very graceful so and poems, and of some very biting satires under title "Abuses Stript and Whipt." "Britain's Reme brancer" is a long and able poem, written by him London, during the plague of 1627, and is by so considered the most valuable of all his writings.

The following is extracted from "The Shephear Hunting," and is a description of the hounds of true-growne hunts-man," as Wither expresses it:—

My first esteemed dogge that I did find,
Was by descent of old Acteon's kind;
A brache, which if I do not ayme amisse,
For all the world is iust like one of his:
She 's named Loue, and scarce yet knowes her duty,
Her damme's my ladies pretty beagle, Beauty,
I bred her vp my selfe with wondrous charge,
Vntill she grew to be exceeding large,

And waxt so wanton that I did abhorre it,
And put her out amongst my neighbours for it.
The next is Lust, a hound that's kept abroad
Mongst some of my acquaintance, but a toad
Is not more loathsome: 'tis a curre will range
Extreamely, and is ever full of mange;
And cause it is infectious, she's not wunt
To come among the rest, bvt when they hunt.
Hate is the third, a hounde both despe and long,
His sire is true or else supposed wrong.
He'le haue a snap at all that passe him by,
And yet pursues his game most eagerly;
With him goes Enuie coupled, a leane curre,
And she'le hold out, hunt we ne're so farre:
She pineth much and feedeth little to,
Yet stands and snarleth at the rest that doe.
Then there's Reuenge, a wondrous depe-mouth'd dog,
So fleet, I'me faine to hunt him with a clog;
Yet many times he'le much outstrip his bounds,
And hunts not closely with the other hounds;
He'le venter on a lion in his ire,
Curst Choller was his damme, and Wrong his sire.
This Choller is a brache, that's very old,
And spends her mouth too much to haue it hold;
She's very teasty, an vnpleasing curre
That bites the very stones, if they but sturre;
Or when that ought but her displeasure moues
She'le bite and snap at any one she loues.
But my quicke scented'st dog is Ielousie,
The truest of this brede's in Italie.
The damme of mine would hardly fill a gloue,
It was a ladies little dogge call'd Loue;
The sire a poor deformed curre nam'd Feare,
As shagged and as rough as is a beare;
And yet the whelpe turn'd after neither kind,
For he is very large, and ne're-hand blind.
At the first sight he hath a pretty culler,
But doth not seeme so when you view him fuller:
A vile suspitious beast, his lookes are bad,
And I doe feare in time he will grow mad.

nd so Wither carries on his forcible similitudes de-
:riptive of the hounds Avarice, Despair, Cruelty, Joy,
orrow, Vanity, Inconstancy, &c.

Giles and Phineas Fletcher, two brothers, and cou-

sins of the celebrated dramatist whose name is l nked with that of Beaumont, were also poets flou ing about this period. They were both clergy Giles is the author of a religious poem, "Christ's tory in Heaven, and Christ's Triumph on Earth, Death, and after Death," written somewhat afte Spenserian model. Phineas's name has come dov us, coupled with some eclogues and poetical pi and a tedious allegorical poem entitled the "P Island," which is nothing more nor less th poetical description of the human body. It is fair to state however, that this latter production tains some very beautiful passages. The works c two Fletchers are stated to have formed part o studies of Milton.

There are few more delightful works in the lan than William Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals." M filled with descriptive and imaginative scenes, an little devoted to the expression of human passi feeling, there is, however, an inexpressible charm the book—due, no doubt, principally to the rich freedom, and melodiousness of the verse—that c but seduce the reader. The two extracts here will tend to give some conception of the poem whole. Browne was a native of Devon; and pe many of the scenes he has depicted had their ori in his native county. He was also the author of Inner Temple Masque," and of "The Shepherd's in Seven Eclogues."

Here is Browne's description of a rural concert

The lilly-handed morne
Saw Phœbus stealing dewe from Ceres's corne
The mounting larke (daie's herauld) got on wing,

Bidding each bird chuse out his bough and sing.
The lofty treble sung the little wren;
Robin the meane, that best of all loves men;
The nightingale the tenor; and the thrush
The counter-tenor sweetly in a bush:
And that the musicke might be full in parts
Birds from the groves flew with right willing harts,
But (as it seem'd) they thought (as do the swaines
Which tune their pipes on sack'd Hibernias plaines)
There should some droaning part be, therefore will'd
Some bird to flie into a neighb'ring field,
In embassie unto the king of bees,
To aide his partners on the flowres and trees,
Who condiscending gladly flew along
To beare the base to his well-tuned song:
The crow was willing they should be beholding
For his deepe voyce, but, being hoarse with scolding,
He thus lends aide; upon an oake doth climbe,
And nodding with his head so keepeth time.
O true delight enharboring the brests
Of those sweet creatures with the plumy crests:
Had Nature unto man such simple'sse given,
He would, like birds, be farre more neere to heaven.

The following will remind some readers as not unlike ıe morning picture in the "L'Allegro" of Milton :—

By this had Chanticlere, the village-cocke,
Bidden the good-wife for her maides to knocke,
And the swart plow-man for his breakfast staid,
That he might till those lands were fallow laid;
The hills and vallies here and there resound
With the re-ecchoes of the deepe-mouth'd hound;
Each shepheard's daughter with her cleanly paile
Was come a-field to milke the morning's meale;
And, ere the sunne had clymb'd the easterne hils,
To gild the mutt'ring bournes and pretty vils,
Before the lab'ring bee had left the hive,
And nimble fishes, which in rivers dive,
Began to leape, and catch the drowned flie,
I rose from rest, not infelicitie.

I shall now notice one or two of the leading religious poets of the time, and then direct the student's ttention to the great example in whom they culminated—John *Milton*. Many important names have

been omitted in the foregoing brief notices, but the nature of the present work, as has been already stated, will not allow of a full enumeration of our best writers; nor, in fact, is such its aim. The object sought to be achieved is to point out to the self-improver a few of the greater stars in a firmament that is thickly studded, and leave him to acquire a more intimate knowledge of them by assiduous observation and study.

Quarles, Herrick, and Herbert are the three poets whom I shall place before the student. That there were many others need hardly be said. But the three just mentioned will amply meet our present requirements. Francis Quarles' "Emblems," Robert Herrick's "Hesperides," and George Herbert's "Temple," are three works noticeable for the quaintnesses with which they are filled as much as for their divine poetic expression. The "Emblems" was a very popular book in its day—indeed the same may be said of it now in our rural districts—and is written with much fire and vigour, although there is a ruggedness and coarseness about it that will not please most readers. Herrick's "Hesperides" is full of elegant and delicate fancies, but it is much marred by licentious images and conceits characteristic of the period at which it was written. Many of the poems in it, too, are, as the title of the book—"Poems human and divine"—implies, much more human than divine, being of an amatory cast. Herbert, a brother of the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury, on the contrary, is free from some of the faults ascribed to the two preceding poets; the style of many of his pieces is flowing, lucid, and melodious. Herbert was very popular in the times of the first and second Charles.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENGLISH POETS

(Continued).

LET us now pass on to the next great poetic landmark, John Milton (1608-74). Of Milton, of his general sweetness, his eloquence, purity, and sublimity, it would be impossible to speak too highly. No man, either after or before him, can, to any great extent, be considered his equal. Wordsworth, in giving poetic expression to the noble aspiration of Englishmen after freedom, says :—

> We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake, the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held ;

and in this exaltation of our two great national poets he recognizes the individuality and sovereignty of each in his particular sphere. Far higher than Shakespeare in purity and holiness, far his superior in learning and the necessary acquirements of a great poet, Milton has no rival either in our own language or in any other. Perhaps Dante comes nearest to him. Like his own

Eve before her fall, Milton is all purity, sweetness, and love. His soul, full of grateful prayer, as an opening rose is of dew when the morning sun kisses it, turns towards God with the noblest and truest exhalations of reverence and love; and, without the sins of David, Milton shows the humble gratitude of the sacred psalmist. Christian in his worship, and learned in his prayer, he yet offers the unwavering faith of the child, and the undoubting trust of the saint. Thus, before he begins his divine poem, he prays for support:—

> And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
> Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
> Instruct me, for Thou knowest;
> * * * What in me is dark,
> Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
> That to the highth of this great argument
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men.

Throughout all Milton's great work there is the same excelling purpose. He writes like a divine author, above all petty jealousies, all littlenesses, so full of humility, learning, and holiness, that even to be of his regiment, a private in the ranks where he was general, should exalt a man. His minor poems are of so true a cast that almost every line of them, of the "Allegro" and "Penseroso," is quoted as a household word. Never does he stoop to, or palter with, his public or with his own fame. His sonnets have the grand swell and diapason of a fine organ; his love of *goodness* and manly independence, and his true greatness of mind, are so visible through every thing he touches—even in his controversial pamphlets and angry "Defence of the English People," in prose—that, if we admitted men *of rank into* the republic of letters, Milton would be

the highest nobleman. The student cannot do better, if he wishes to gain some slight glimmering of the true office and dignity of letters, than study Milton's sublime poetry.

Extracts from Milton are so plentiful that I turn for novelty to the description of "the mother of arts and eloquence," from "Paradise Regained":—

Behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,—
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades;
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There flowery hill Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whispering stream: within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages,—his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:
There shalt thou hear and learn the sacred power
Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian Lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,—
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own:
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In chorus or iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight received
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
High actions and high passions best describing:
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancients whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratie,
Shook the arsenal and fulmined over Greece,
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear

From heaven descended to the low-roofed house
Of Socrates ; see there his tenement,
Whom, well inspired, the oracle pronounced
Wisest of men,—from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the stoic severe.

The following is extracted from the musically delightful masque of "Comus":—

COMUS (*having heard the* LADY'S *song*). Can any mortal
mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled ! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul
And lap it in Elysium ; Scylla wept,
And chid his barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause :
Yet they in peaceful slumber lull'd the sense,
And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself ;
But such a sacred and homefelt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen. Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.
Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is address'd to unattending ears :
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my sever'd company
Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.

Comus. What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lady. Dim darkness and this leafy labyrinth.
Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Comus. By falsehood or discourtesy? or why?
Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.
Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?
Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.
Comus. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.
Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!
Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose.
Comus. Were they of manly prime or youthful bloom?
Lady. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.
Comus. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinkt hedger at his supper sat;
I saw them under a green mantling vine
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots.
Their port was more than human as they stood:
I took it for a fairy vision
Of some gay creatures of the element
That in the colours of the rainbow live
And play in the plighted* clouds. I was awe-struck,
And as I pass'd I worshipp'd. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to heaven
To help you find them.

Here is a specimen from the "Samson Agonistes," in which Milton, in the person of Samson, most touchingly refers to his own blindness:—

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies—O, worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eased;
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me:

* Plaited.

They creep, yet see,—I dark in light exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong;
Within doors or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
"Let there be light," and light was over all,
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark,
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,—
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part,—why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd,
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been exiled thus from light,
As in the land of darkness yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but O, yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,—
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs;
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life—
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.

Cowley (1618-67), Butler (1612-80), and Marvell (1620-21-1678) may in this age be classed as next in importance to Milton, and were three of the forerunners of Dryden. Each of these poets in his poetic effusions, has distinctive characteristics of his own. Milton is said to have estimated Cowley as the next best English poet to Spenser and Shakespeare. Posterity does not seem to have borne out this conclusion; although his verse,

having a philosophic turn, has never wanted a limited circle of admirers. Abraham Cowley was the author of a number of poetical pieces, of an epic ("Davideis"), and of a comedy. Charles II. was pleased to say of him, when he heard of his death, that "he had not left a better man behind him in England."

The "Hudibras" of Samuel Butler is one of the few poems lines from which are to be met with in our everyday social intercourse. This of itself tells in what estimation it is held. There is hardly another poem in the language which carries so essentially distinct a style of its own. It is at once comic, pointed, and precise, continually surprising the reader with its vivacity and freshness, to the success of which its doggrel verse and odd rhymes no doubt contribute. There is considerable affinity, in many respects, between the poetry of Butler, whose work is so well known that we shall not quote from it, and Dryden, who will presently be introduced to the reader.

Andrew Marvell was not only a genuine English patriot, but a really elegant and spirited poet. His love songs have all the sweetness and real feeling of true poetry; and his more serious pieces all the dignity and refinement of his noble calling. In his satirical productions he was an able champion of the popular cause, and a vexatious adversary to the Court, who, while admiring the wit and ability of the poet, were yet unable to corrupt his integrity. Some of his lines would bear application to the present times:—

> The Londoners gent
> To the King do present
> In a box the City maggot:
> *'Tis a thing* full of weight

That requires all the might
Of whole Guildhall team to drag it.

Whilst their churches are unbuilt
And their houses undwelt,
And their orphans want bread to feed 'em,
Themselves they've bereft
Of the little wealth they'd left
To make an offering of their freedom.

Marvell was the friend of Milton; and his high-sou
nature and incorruptibility well fitted him for c
munion with that great man. The following is
tracted from one of the best of his poetical pi
—"The Emigrants in the Bermudas":—

Where the remote Bermudas ride
In th' ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat that row'd along,
The list'ning winds received their song.
"What should we do but sing his praise
That led us through the watery maze
Unto an island so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?
Where He the huge sea-monsters racks,
That lift the deep upon their backs;
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms and prelates' rage.
He gave us this eternal spring
Which here enamels every thing,
And sends the fowls to us in care,
On daily visits through the air.
He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranate's close
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows.
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet,
But apples, plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice.
With cedars, chosen by his hand,
From Lebanon he stores the land;
And makes the hollow seas that roar
Proclaim the ambergris on shore.
He cast—of which we rather boast—

The Gospel's pearl upon our coast ;
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple where to sound his name.
Oh ! let our voice his praise exalt,
Till it arrive at heaven's vault,
Which then perhaps rebounding may
Echo beyond the Mexic bay."
Thus sang they in the English boat,
A holy and a cheerful note,
And all the way to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.

: in importance chronologically to Milton, and
ıown and worthy of study, in the order of time, is
ryden (1631-1700). Milton, compared to him, is
ɜ latter's own hind compared to his panther :—

A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged.
The panther, sure the noblest next the hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind.

ı lived too much amongst the courtiers, and
ıoreover, too much of a professional man of
always to care what he wrote ; moreover, he was
paid, and was a spendthrift. But he wrote like
ar and a gentleman, and was full of thought, of
ɔf ease, and of strength. His verses sparkle and
nd move along with all the majesty and strength
ı in chain armour—weighty and nervous, yet
and agile. Few poets have been so happy in
ıyings as Dryden : his lines remain for ever in
emory, because they are so well polished and
. He has such a command of language that he
y any thing, and cover it with the graces of style ;
seldom rises into the purest regions of poetry,
ur ancient and modern poets—like Spenser,
; *or Keats.* John Dryden is more of a court

satirist than a great poet or a great teacher: yet, he has done he has done so well that it can sca be surpassed, and it will give pleasure still.

The characters of his satires are so delicately dr and so true to nature, that they must live for Let the reader ponder over these few lines and t dissect them, and put in prose or in verse similar s and sarcasm into the same, ay, or into a ten t greater space, and then he will find what a mast his art Dryden was. Here is his great charact Villiers, Duke of Buckingham:—

> A man so various, that he seem'd to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
> Stiff in opinions—always in the wrong,
> Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
> But in the course of one revolving moon
> Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
> Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
> Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.

Almost every succeeding line in the satire is as sti smooth, and elastic as the above. Of some me says, they belong to the herd of those

> Who think too little, and who talk too much.

Of a mean hypocrite he dashes in the character couplet. He, he says,

> Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,
> And never broke the Sabbath but for gain.

And one could fill the whole of this essay with cou equally true and bitter. When Dryden, who tu from the Protestant faith, and, oddly to express it, jured the *errors* of the Church of England, *to em those* of the Church of Rome, wrote, in defence c

new faith, "The Hind and Panther," he gave us, in a noble poem, all that could be said on the side of his Church; and when he pictured the "faith of a layman," in the "Religio Laici," he produced a poem in which the Rationalist and Materialist are utterly confuted. The latter piece he begins in a very noble vein:—

> Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
> To lonely, weary, wandering travellers
> Is Reason to the soul: and as on high
> Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent us, not t'assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day.

No divine ever argued better. Will any one try to say more in a sermon than there is in those full and sufficient seven lines? Again, how cleverly the poet laughs at and ridicules the Atheist, who cannot name his "first cause" God, and believes that the world grew in some chanceful and hap-hazard manner, or, as Mr. Darwin would say, on a principle of natural selection! Let the reader weigh and ponder over every word. Who, he asks, if we deny Revelation, who is God?—who is the Universal He?—

> Whether some soul encompassing this ball,
> Unmade, unmoved, yet making, moving all,
> Or various atoms' interfering dance
> Leapt into form, the noble work of Chance;
> Or this great All was from eternity,
> Not e'en the Stagyrite himself could see,
> And Epicurus guess'd as well as he.
>
> * * * *
>
> Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll
> Without a centre where to fix the soul.

The works of John Milton and of John Dryden, carefully studied, tend to remove many of the failings

of our common nature, and are apt to moderate
of that looseness of thought and of writing into
most of us at the present day are only too apt
They especially vindicate the majesty of our lite
and, like sturdy and gigantic trees amongst a v
dergrowth, show what worth poetry has, and h
far from weakening the heart and understand
strengthens and ennobles both.

Chapter VII.

THE ESSAYISTS.

WHEN a man of high and bright intellect is viciously witty, as was William Congreve, and finds success an accompaniment of his mischievous talent, he may take to himself this reflection, that dozens of people will imitate his wickedness, where not one will equal his wit or meet with similar recompence. A crowd of others followed the clever young gentleman who wrote so well, and yet was ashamed of being known as an author. There is an old anecdote of him which is so very characteristic that it will bear repeating. It relates that young M. Voltaire came to England and called on Congreve purposely to see the great author. "I am not an author," said Congreve, "I am a gentleman; I don't wish to be known as an author."—"If you were only a gentleman," was the answer, "I should not have come from so great a distance to see you." It was one of the great faults of Congreve that he never recognized the importance and the true function of authorship, which is, by pleasing *and amusing, to elevate,* if not to teach, but certainly

never to debase. The anecdote is valuable m
on this account, that it connects us, as it we
the age of Congreve and Queen Anne. The e
the Great French Revolution are still freshly
bered; its results are before our eyes; and yet
Voltaire, the cause of that revolution, so far
man could be, quietly visiting and talking w
whose works amused Addison and Marlborou
whose first play John Dryden had praised.
died in 1778, so that it is almost possible the
be those now alive who lived at the same ti
who perhaps can even remember the vision
wonderful and clever old man. William Co
our greatest master of the artificial drama,
London in 1729.

The connection between essay writing ar
writing is, no doubt, not easy to be seen. It
fact be considered rather a contrast than a
tion; indeed it is in that way that we shall in
it. The whole of society had become corrupt
time of the second Charles, though not thro
influence of plays, because the theatre is a re
and a picture of the world even while it teac
world; but there is very little doubt that the
helped to corrupt the manners that it reflected
tical and social economy was unstudied in E
the nobility were decaying, the yeomanry, the
archy, and the tradesmen were getting rich, an
seems to have been a general frowardness and
ness of manner, which we have not entirely l
which are now wonderfully mitigated, and
nearly banished. The country gentleman
Squire Western, swearing, drinking, riding to

rting, cock-fighting, bull-baiting, and betting; with
ıaplain whom he despised, and who came in to say
:e, but was not permitted to sit down at table.
: clergy were for the most part unlearned, unable
›reach, unwilling to instruct their flocks, contented
ı a small living, and ready to patch their fortunes
marrying the waiting woman of the squire's wife.
course there were some noble exceptions to this
:; and at a later period Goldsmith, in a picture of
own brother, has drawn a charming portrait of "a
›on rich on forty pounds a year,"

> Who tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

both Fielding, a perfect painter, and Jonathan
ft have clearly shown how degraded was the general
ı of parson. As to the Nonconformists, they
e for the most part untaught enthusiasts, sectaries
›se hatred of vice was no doubt genuine, but whose
uliarities and eccentric austerities made religion
:ulous and virtue odious. The Army was about
al to the Church; younger sons, and even grooms,
endants, and butlers, officered it; broken tap-
's and decayed farming men made its rank and
; and Physic, requiring but a small examination,
›thecaries having none to undergo, had its ranks
:d by ignorant quacks and pretenders, who, instead
driving a disease from the flesh, riveted it in the
ıes. Mediocrity flourished: Genius retired, gnashed
teeth and starved. England declined in the scale
nations, and quietly set herself to grow rich and
rse-proud. Her citizens were gluttons, rude, bois-
ous in their jollities and their feasts; their sons for
most part upstart coxcombs, and their daughters

hoydens, fond of fine clothes, of aping the high peo
and assuming airs which sat on them about as well
"great Alcides' shoes upon an ass." Vice was ope
taught in the playhouse; the Bench of Bishops h
it is said, more than one infidel, and foolish rant
made the walls of the Conventicle ring again, and s
female devotees to the madhouse.

Under these circumstances arose the moral essay
of Queen Anne's time, of whom the present cha
will presently treat, and whose works many of our s
improving students must read. I have given wh
believe to be the true *raison d'être* of these gifted
admirable men, whom God had inspired sufficientl
counteract the prevalent vices and follies of the ag
which they lived. They were not too wise nor
good for their generation; they were no fanatics,
did not write above the heads of their readers; t
were not so virtuous but that they could not laug
vice; they were true gentlemen and men of the w
who did their work humbly and effectually, just
cause they made no fuss about it. It would be h
to find among God's works any instruments be
fitted for an especial purpose than were the m
essayists of Queen Anne's days.

Preceding them, however, by a considerable peri
were other essayists, and one of them, the nob
of his class, of whom mention must first be ma
Lord Bacon, (1561-1626,)—in another chapter to
noticed as a philosopher—produced in 1597, "
says," "Religious Meditations," the "Essays" in E
lish and the "Meditationes Sacræ" in Latin. Th
latter consist of twelve short essays on religious s
jects, each being headed with a text from Script

the "Essays," this first edition contained only ten, having withdrawn the "Meditations" from circu-ɔn, the contents furnished afterwards matter for itional essays. Year after year, till that of his th, 1626, the "Essays," fifty-eight in number, were ed as we now have them; and these "best fruits : by the good increase which God gives to my pen labours, I could yield,"—his own words in dedi-ng them to the Duke of Buckingham—he hopes ay last as long as books last." This was a little k in 16mo., which was worth not only its weight old, but in diamonds. The "Essays" were written nglish, on purpose, as the author said, "to come ıe to men's business and bosoms," while more ned treatises, and indeed almost every kind of lite-work, were composed in Latin, as not being nded for the vulgar—*i. e.* the people. Bacon's ssays" are very short, but full of substance, and unding with deep and acute thought. He follows track which every true essayist must follow, for his ect must always be not to teach "new" truths, as low critics often wish him, because truth is eternal cannot be new, but in a pleasant, familiar, and ɔlarly way to remind people of old truths, to recall n to their duties, to show them what life is, and to ly instil instruction during the process of amusement. h subjects as Truth, Death, Revenge, Marriage and gle Life, Superstition, Atheism, Cunning, Delays, nsel, Friendship, Adversity, Love, and Parents and ldren, are common-place subjects now, and were ı; and it requires not only great skill, but great wis-ı to treat them pleasingly, calmly, and yet with such a ness *of style that multitudes* shall delight to read

them. This Bacon did. He had begun early in life to jot down apophthegms, wise sayings, and little anecdotes; and these he interwove into his essays, and used to enforce his opinions, or to illustrate his position. They were drawn from ancient history, classic learning, or from his own experience in courts, or at the bar; thus, while he talks of Antigonus, Philo Judæus, Augustus Cæsar, or Crassus, he can repeat that "Mr. Bettenham, reader of Gray's Inn, used to say that riches were like muck (dung): where it lay of a heap, it gave but a stench and ill odour; but when it was spread over the ground, then it was the cause of much fruit." Hence one never tires of these Essays, because when the thought is too deep or heavy for the ordinary reader, there is always some pleasant turn or anecdote to relieve it. But the staple is always weighty and wise; and the style sudden, clear, vivid, and full of those short surprises, which at once arrest and fix the attention. Thus, discoursing of "Truth," Bacon commences thus—"'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief." And a modern critic would fancy he was clever in catching up the author, and telling him that Pilate was neither giddy nor jesting, but full of thought, anxious to release the Saviour, of whom he at once said to the Jews, "*I* find in him *no fault at all.*" But the phrase is so striking, and so newly put, that the reader goes on to the end of the essay. Of Death, he commences, "Men fear death as children fear to go into the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other." And in a second essay on the same he says, "I have

thought upon death, and I find it the least of all
" These initiatory sentences, chosen with great
lead one on to the body of the essay, and fix
selves in the mind. A great many of his wise
gs Bacon took from the ancients, and some part
s essays he borrowed from Seneca. He abounds
otations, generally from Latin authors; and we
, as an essayist, he wisely puts forth no opinion
ut strongly enforcing it by the dictum of some
ity and wise man. Hence there is a certain
rity in all he says, which no other author has.
con's essays are easily procurable, and should be
and pondered over by all.[1]

e following is taken from the one on Atheism :—
I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend,
the Talmud, and the Alcoran than that this
rsal frame is without a mind. And therefore God
wrought miracle to convince atheism, because his
ary works convince it. It is true that a little
sophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth
ilosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.
hile the mind of man looketh upon sacred causes
ered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no
er; but when it beholdeth the chain of them con-
ate and linked together, it must needs fly to Pro-
ice and Deity. Nay, even that school which is
accused of atheism doth most demonstrate reli-
—that is the school of Leucippus, and Democritus,
Epicurus. For it is a thousand times more credible
four mutable elements and one immutable fifth
ce, duly and eternally placed, need no God, than

[1] Mr. A. Wright's may be pointed out as a cheap and reliable
on of *the original text.*

that an army of infinite small portions or seeds, unplaced, should have produced this order and beauty without a Divine Marshal. The Scripture saith, 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' It is not said, 'The fool hath thought in his heart;' so as he rather saith it by rote to himself, as that he would have, than that he can thoroughly believe it, or be persuaded of it; for none deny there is a God but those for whom it maketh that there were no God. It appeareth in nothing more that atheism is rather in the lip than in the heart of man than by this, that atheists will ever be talking of that their opinion, as if they fainted in it within themselves, and would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others; nay, more, you shall have atheists strive to get disciples, as it fareth with other sects; and, which is most of all, you shall have of them that will suffer for atheism, and not recant: whereas if they did truly think that there were no such thing as God, why should they trouble themselves? Epicurus is charged that he did but dissemble for his credit's sake, when he affirmed there were blessed natures, but such as enjoyed themselves without having respect to the government of the world, wherein, they say, he did temporise though in secret he thought there was no God. But certainly he is traduced, for his words are noble and divine—*Non Deos vulgi negare profanum, sed vulgi opiniones Diis applicare profanum.*[1] Plato could have said no more. . . . They that deny a God destroy man's nobility; for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body; and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature.

[1] It is not profane to deny the deities of the vulgar, but it is profane to apply the opinions of the vulgar to the divinities.

stroys likewise magnanimity and the raising of
n nature. For take an example of a dog, and
what a generosity and courage he will put on
he finds himself maintained by a man, who, to
is instead of a God, or *melior natura;* which
ge is manifestly such as that creature, without that
lence of a better nature than his own, could never
. So man, when he resteth and assureth himself
Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force
ıith which human nature in itself could not obtain.
:fore as atheism is in all respects hateful, so in
hat it depriveth human nature of the means to
itself above human frailty."

.ny years after Bacon, when in retirement, Lord
ndon, who had been a statesman, courtier, and
r, and had reflected much upon life, wrote his
ays," which were not published till after his death,
ı which he reflects upon business and upon men
ıanners. These are not very wise, not very charm-
. their style, but they should especially be read,
with the essays of Abraham Cowley, also a poet
ı statesman, because they will place the self-
ver in a new relationship to his fellow men.
Clarendon will show him how a statesman feels—
for instance, Lord Palmerston, a prime minister
man of the world, shrewd, clever, and observant,
l look upon those around him. The letters of
:e Walpole and his Reminiscences should also be
:d, in the same way, by those who want to know
good, generous, and wise, or how mean, petty
ontemptible people are in the court and on the
:s of kings. When the student finds by these
, *which in their first effect* may be saddening, that

hardly one courtier has honour or strength enough tell the truth, and that scarcely one lady in the high circles has virtue enough to resist the advances king, then he will probably thank God for keeping in the middle estate, or even for dowering him the greater gift of poverty; when he finds Claren thankful to be at peace, and Cowley retiring to small fields, after being the most important secre (writer in cipher) the two kings Charles ever had, thanking God that he is well out of it, and that he labour amongst his peasants; when he reads of e petty meanness and lying habit placed to the acc of great men by Walpole, Swift, and Burnet, and reason to believe that Nature is always the same will neither envy nor hate, and will appreciate truest distich ever written by Webster, in the "Duc of Malfy":—

> Glories, like glow-worms, afar off, shine bright,
> But, seen too near, give neither heat nor light.

Pursuing this train of thought, and reading for purpose of forming his character, enlarging his m and making himself a wiser, and therefore a better n the student may read the "Anatomy of Melancho by Robert Burton (1576-1640), a curious, thoughtful, and quaint book, full of quotations, exceedingly suggestive; the "Occasional Meditatio by Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich (1574-165 "Characters," by Sir Thomas Overbury (1581-161 and "Resolves, Divine, Political, and Moral," by O Feltham (*circ.* 1610-1678). Some of these books not met with every day, and are somewhat rare, but w met with they will repay perusal, and they are imp

ant as having given a great many useful hints to writers who followed these authors, and thereby having formed certain features of English literature. In Overbury's "Characters," for instance, we not only meet with the Englishman of the day, the milkmaid, tinker, soldier, yeoman, or franklin, and the clown, or plain countryman, but we see the lines laid down whereon Dickens and Thackeray, who may never have seen the book, build their descriptive characters. Above all, when the student meets with these books he may be certain that he holds in his hands sound honest thought, not very acute, not very high, but thought; not mere words spun into never-ending, bombastic sentences.

Here is one of Sir Thomas Overbury's characters, perhaps his happiest; certainly full of the most beautiful ideas and images:—

"*A fair and happy milkmaid*

"Is a country wench that is so far from making herself beautiful by art, that one look of hers is able to put all face-physic out of countenance. She knows a fair look is but a dumb orator to commend virtue, therefore minds it not. All her excellencies stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel, which is herself, is far better than outsides of tissue; for though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silk-worm, she is decked in innocence, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long in bed, spoil both her complexion and conditions: nature hath taught her, too, immoderate sleep is rust to the soul; she rises therefore with chanticleer, her dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her *curfew*. *In* milking a cow, and straining

the teats through her fingers, it seems that so swee
milk-press makes the milk whiter or sweeter; for ne
came almond-glove or aromatic ointment on her pa
to taint it. The golden ears of corn fall and kiss l
feet, when she reaps them, as if they wished to
bound and led prisoners by the same hand that fell
them. Her breath is her own, which scents all the y
long of June, like a new-made haycock. She mal
her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft w
pity; and when winter evenings fall early, sitting
her merry wheel, she sings defiance to the giddy wh
of fortune. She doth all things with so sweet a gra
it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, be
her mind is to do well. She bestows her year's wa
at next fair, and in choosing her garments, counts
bravery in the world like decency. The garden a
beehive are all her physic and surgery, and she li
the longer for it. She dares go alone, and unfold she
in the night; and fears no manner of ill, because s
means none; yet, to say truth, she is never alone, l
is still accompanied with old songs, honest though
and prayers, but short ones; yet they have their e
cacy in that they are not palled with ensuing idle cc
tations. Lastly, her dreams are so chaste that s
dare tell them; only a Friday's dream is all her sup
stition; that she conceals for fear of anger. Th
lives she, and all her care is, she may die in the spri
time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her windi
sheet."

More attention must be paid to another essay
"the learned" John Selden (1584-1654), whose wor
in this way, are none the less essays because they w
spoken, and not written. After his death a collecti

of "the excellent things that usually fell from him," under the title of "Table Talk," was made and published; and the closeness of thought and clearness of expression of those excellent things, make them worthy to be treasured. Thus, of humility, Selden says, "Humility is a virtue all preach, none practise, and yet everybody is content to hear. The master thinks it good doctrine for his servant, the laity for the clergy, and the clergy for the laity." Now in that short sentence there is a volume of modern leading articles. Again: "A king is a thing men have made for their own sakes for quietness' sake; just as in a family one is appointed to buy the meat." Here you see at once the bare reason of kings, and that it is lawful, as Selden ever held, to correct kings. Selden, who was one of the best and wisest lawyers we have ever had, and a man of whom the English nation should ever be proud, is almost always called the "learned Selden," for he was, as Lord Clarendon says, "a man of so stupendous a learning in all kinds, and in all languages, that a man would have thought him conversant with nothing but books; yet his humanity and courtesy were such as one would have thought him bred in the best courts, *but that his good nature, charity, and delight in doing good exceeded that breeding.*" This is a sly hit at the Court, but a well deserved one. Selden, who was a sincere Christian, was yet no friend to clerical presumption and pride, and continually offended the clergy by his outspoken wit. He knew better than any one what the rights of the laity in the Church of England were; and it is a pity that some of his works, especially his "Treatise on Titles of Honour," and his "History of Tithes," are *not more read.*

After Bacon, Cowley, Clarendon, and it may be the "Characteristics" of Lord Shaftesbury (1671-1713), one may read with much profit the moral essayists whose works followed the licentious dramas of Charles II., and were, as I have supposed, a very natural consequent of the viciousness of dramatic literature. There were no newspapers then to correct the taste of the public; and, led away entirely by the force of stage example, and the doctrines inculcated there, part of the youth of England would have become utterly corrupt, while the other part, led into the opposite extreme, would in its turn have become fanatic in religion and tyrannical in moral assertion, had not the true *via media* been shown by two gentlemen, Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Steele (1671-1729) and Joseph Addison (1672-1719), who established first the "Tatler," and afterwards a little daily paper called the "Spectator," which was filled not with the news bawled out as contained in the "Flying Post," the "Intelligencer," or the "Chronicle," but with essays on men and manners, on virtue, friendship, behaviour at church or at play, with comic and bitter satire on the folly of vice, with letters from beaux and belles upon shoes, stays, hoops, wigs, and head gear, or upon marriage, friendship, giggling, flirtation, quarrels, and gossip. The correspondents' column of some of our little domestic papers, as done now-a-days, exactly reflects the correspondents' letters of Steele and Addison and the Spectator, with this exception—that they are now wholly genuine (a very important point), whereas the writers in the "Spectator" manufactured their correspondence whenever they wanted to attack a folly, to silence a rival, or to support a friend. The end, how-

of these great and admirable essayists, who have
n indelible mark on our literature, was one which
always do them honour. Without any fear of
ng and deistical critics before their eyes, they tried
hold common sense, decency, order, virtue, and
on, and on the other hand to show the folly of
and to laugh at the senseless profligacy of the
the fop, and the fool. Now, whenever wit and
m attempt this task, it is easy to imagine which
must succumb. To the essayists of the time of
n Anne, England owes a debt of gratitude, which
l be very hard to pay.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESSAYISTS.

(*Continued.*)

MORAL PERIODICAL WRITERS AND PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

IN the previous chapter was traced the connection between the immoral literature of the theatre and those moral essayists who did their best to form the age. The period of Queen Anne, called by some the Augustan age of English literature, certainly afforded to writers a more open career than they had hitherto shared. The Revolution of 1688 had the effect of other revolutions, and brought shining talent somewhat to the fore. England had long been not only ungrateful, but unmindful of her great men; but Addison, Prior, Swift, and a few others, were allowed some little share in state offices and power. In France they have long done, and now do, things better. "At the present moment," wrote Macaulay, in his essay on Addison, "most of the persons whom we see at the head of both the Administration and of the Opposition have been Professors, Historians, Journalists, Poets. The influence of the Literary Class in England during

the generation which followed the Revolution was great but by no means so great as it has lately been in France; for in England the aristocracy of intellect had (and has) to contend with a powerful and deeply-rooted aristocracy of a very different kind. France had no Somersets and Shrewsburies to keep down her Addisons and Priors."

Certainly the great debt which England owes is not altogether to the territorial aristocracy, which, in many cases, simply dwells on the land which others improve, but to the Aristocracy of the heart and the brain, which has never failed her, and in all her struggles and battles has fought on the side of Liberty and Progress. The success of the moral essayists to whom reference has been made brought forward a great number of didactic writers, who not only published their lay sermons in small weekly papers, but also invaded the columns of the News Letters, and gradually formed the daily newspaper as it now is; for before this it was merely a dry epitome of news from this or that country, without any editorial comment: truly a mere record of facts, without any opinion whatever. Now, if there is one thing certain in literature more than another, it is that readers look for guidance, advice, and opinion. It is quite true that a very powerful writer may, in a popular journal, entirely overbear opposition and beat down original thought; still, it is necessary that opinion should have a leader, and one generally felt to be sound, worthy, and conscientious; and, if such does not exist, society to some extent loses its power of acting in masses, and becomes feeble, neutral, and emasculated.

Joseph Addison, the son of a well-known divine, Dean *Lancelot Addison, was* educated at Queen's and Mag-

dalen Colleges, Oxford, where he distinguished himself
He was employed by the Ministry, and wrote a poem
"The Campaign," of which only one line is now fairl
remembered. He was one of the young wits who ad
mired the great John Dryden, and was permitted t
contribute to his "Miscellanies," when, in 1709, hi
friend Steele formed "a literary project, of which h
was far indeed from foreseeing the consequences." S
says Macaulay, and we may well agree with hir
Periodical papers had been during many years pu
lished in London, but most of them were political.
others, questions of morality, taste, love, theolog
casuistry, history, &c., were discussed.

One of these, overlooked by most writers on Engli
literature, deserves to be mentioned. In 1690, Jo
Dunton, the bookseller, published the "Atheni
Mercury," afterwards called, when printed in volum
the "Athenian Oracle," by a company of gentlem
calling themselves "the Athenian Society," who w
no doubt poor scholars and clergymen, most of th
booksellers' hacks of the famous J. D. These pape
consisting of a single sheet, and printed once, twi
and lastly four times a week, continued to be issu
for some years, and contain answers similar to th
found in the correspondence columns of the periodi
press, only chiefly manufactured on the premises, a
giving the matter the form of question and answer.
the Supplement to the "Athenian Oracle" there i
curious frontispiece, representing the oracular soci
in the dress rendered so familiar to us by Hogar
pictures, sitting behind a large table, to which m
approach and proffer their queries; a veil which ha
from the ceiling obscures the faces of the mysteri

ty, and at once indicates their wisdom and the of their being unknown. At the corners of the plate ketches of the cities of Cambridge, Oxford, Rome, Geneva; and a cat, employed by a monkey to pull nuts out of the fire, shows us pretty fairly in what on the suggestor, Mr. John Dunton, regarded ublic. Some verses, explanatory of this plate, will : in the reader's comprehension of the work :—

> Behind the scenes sit mighty we,
> Nor are we known, nor will we be;
> The world and we exchanging thus,
> While we find chat for them, they work for us !

e rhymes then proceed to sketch the characters of ady, sailor, divine, citizen, soldier, and others who to ask questions, and the great popularity of the is attested by its republication, and by its conce until it made nineteen thin volumes. Charles n, one of the authors satirized by Pope and other emen, contributed to this casuistical "Mercury;" to tell the truth, the work is extremely well and cientiously done, and must have been of great ce in widening and educating the minds of the try people. Advice on dreams, ghosts, Arminn, the personality of the Deity, the origin of evil, is given fairly and honestly, and up to the lights e most advanced of the age, and generally accordo the doctrines of the Church of England. The ss of this publication no doubt urged Steele to sh his own, adding thereto moral essays, and ig down as much as possible the correspondence. ele called in Addison, and the effect this accomed penman had was to raise the work enormously. ed," *said Steele, always* modest and ready to praise

others rather than himself, "like a distressed prince calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was un by my auxiliary. When I had once called him I c not do without dependence on him." Addison's is indeed simple, beautiful, clear, and expressive has the greatest ease possible. Even when the m is small and insignificant, one reads on and on pleasure, because a master holds the pen. "The choice and arrangement of his words," says Maca "would have sufficed to make his essays classical never, not even by Dryden, not even by Temple the English language been written with such sweet grace, and facility. But this was the smallest pa Addison's praise. Had he clothed his thoughts i half-French style of Horace Walpole, or the half-l style of Dr. Johnson, or the half-German jargon o present day, his genius would have triumphed ove faults of manner. As a moral satirist he stands rivalled. If ever the best "Tatlers" and "Specta were equalled in their own kind, we should be incl to guess that it must have been in the lost comedi Menander."

That is, they are unsurpassed. But truth com it to be said that the present generation will find m of them dry, notwithstanding their surpassing s Addison was a man who loved the company of great, and might be characterised as essentially the gentleman. At any rate there is a great deal of fine gentleman style about him. St. Augustine tel that when Terence's celebrated line was first h "*Homo sum; humani nihil à me alienum puto,*" (a man, and everything that concerns mankind tou *me,)* the manliness of the sentence caused the v

:atre of spectators to stand up and fill the air with plause. Addison appears to us as though he looked newhat askance at the poor, the uneducated, and lgar citizen; and would not have lifted a hand to plaud the sentiment. He wrote with an *air vain-:ur*, and his papers have too much of the claim of ing written "by gentlemen and for gentlemen" of ıackeray's burlesque address, which has been used :iously. But, setting aside this foible, he was of a od, sweet, loveable nature, a sound, honest man, d bold enough to do God's work well. He showed ıt wit was not all on the devil's side; that a man uld be a gentleman, a courtier, a writer, a wit, and man of the world, and yet a Christian. He could ıver any thing or any body with the most delicate licule; and yet his talent in this respect was never ırned against anything great, good, reverential, or ıblime. He ridiculed no man's religion, and he lways showed that he loved his own. He taught the eople that the connection between goodness and loom was not necessary; that preciseness and outward how were not true religion; and, on the other hand, ıat "the faith and morality of Hale and Tillotson ight be found in company with wit more sparkling ıan the wit of Congreve, and with humour richer than ıe humour of Vanbrugh." So effectually did he teach ıe nation, that "since his time," says Macaulay, "*the ten violation of decency has always been considered the ark of a fool.*"

Of Sir Richard Steele one might not write so highly an author, but much more affectionately as a man. e was very faulty, often drunken, no doubt; for it ıs then the *fashion to* overpass the boundaries of the

sufficient. Steele is always the generous, often the wise and good man, full of humour and invention. To him we owe the Sir Roger de Coverley and other characters whom Addison afterwards delighted to touch and retouch, until he almost clothed them with flesh and blood; and to him perhaps much can be traced that we find in Sterne, Fielding, Richardson, Thackeray, Dickens, and many of our humorous novelists. Steele, the son of the great Duke of Ormond's private secretary, was educated at Charter House. He was first a private soldier, afterwards an officer in the Guards, and was always, in creed and theory, on the side of morality. He wrote a curious little pamphlet, well meant, and full of a hearty sense of religion, called the "Christian Hero." Afterwards he became an author by profession; projected, suggested, and carried on plenty of "Moral Papers," "Tatlers," "Spectators," "Guardians," and others, and even edited a series of essays by ladies—most probably written entirely by himself—but said to be written by Mrs. Steele. He was the spring of the watch, the more industrious and nearly equally clever, and in our opinion, the more genuine, manly, and loveable character of the two great men to whom England owes so much, and to whom and whose memories the then existing Government and posterity have done so little.

In the 12th number of the "Theatre" Steele draws a contrast between himself and his friend Addison, and here it is:—

"There never was a more strict friendship than between these gentlemen: nor had they ever any difference but what proceeded from their different ways of pursuing the same thing: the one with patience

sight, and temperate address always waited and
med the torrent; while the other often plunged
self into it, and was as often taken out by the
er of him who stood weeping on the bank for
afety, whom he could not dissuade leaping into
Thus these two men lived for some years last
shunning each, but still preserving the most pas-
te concern for their mutual welfare. But when
met they were as unreserved as boys, and talked
greatest affairs, upon which they saw where they
d, without pressing (what they knew impossible)
vert each other."

dison was said to be dull and heavy in conversation.
me occasion when he was charged with this, he
d "Madam, I have only ninepence in my pocket,
can draw for a thousand pounds." The following
t from one of the most pleasing papers con-
ted by Addison to the "Tatler," as being slightly
nent to this anecdote, is placed before the reader.
A conjecture at dispositions from the modulations
e voice.—Sitting in some company, and having
but a little before musical, I chanced to take
e that, in ordinary discourse, words were spoken
erfect notes, and that some of the company used
ths, some fifths, some thirds; and that his discourse
ch was most pleasing, his words, as to their tone,
sisted most of concords, and were of discords of
as made up his harmony. The same person was
most affable, pleasant, and best-natured in the
pany. This suggests a reason why many discourses
h one hears with much pleasure, when they come
e read, scarce seem the same things. . . .
From this *difference* of music in speech we may

conjecture that of tempers. We know the Doric
sounds gravity and sobriety; the Lydian, buxo
and freedom; Æolics, sweet stillness and quiet
posure; the Phrygian, jollity and youthful levity
Ionic is a stiller of storms and disturbances a
from passion. And why may we not reasonabl
pose that those whose speech naturally runs in
notes peculiar to any of these moods are likew
nature, hereunto congenerous? *C, fa, ut* may
me to be of an ordinary capacity, though good
sition. *G, sol, re, ut* to be peevish and effen
Flats, a manly or melancholic sadness. He wh
a voice which will in some measure agree wi
cliffs, to be of good parts and fit for a variety
ployments, yet somewhat of an inconstant
Likewise from the times: so semi-briefs may s
temper dull and phlegmatic; minims, grave and s
crotchets, a prompt wit; quavers, vehemency
sion, and scolds use them; semi-brief-rest may
one either stupid or fuller of thoughts than h
utter; minim-rest, one in a passion. So that fr
natural use of mood, note, and time, we may
dispositions."

Here is a portion of the celebrated paper on
minster Abbey, No. 26 of the "Spectator:"—

"Upon my going into the church I entertaine
self with the digging of a grave, and saw in every s
ful of it that was thrown up the fragment of a b
skull, intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering
that some time or other had a place in the compo
of a human body. Upon this I began to conside
myself what innumerable multitudes of people la
fused together under the pavement of that a

cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

"I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but, for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy, and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tomb-stone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow. When I see kings lying by those who deposed them; when I consider rival wits placed side by side; or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes,—I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together."

Steele and Addison, however, are not our sole

moral essayists. Others took up the pen; a great distance, Dr. Johnson, of whom we shall speak, followed. But such was the fertility English mind, that, between the "Tatler's" and that of the "Rambler"—a period of forty-on —one hundred and six periodical papers were pr and published: in fifty-nine succeeding years the same number came out; since that time we have had not quite so many, but very nea so what wonder if we find "Chitchat" in 17 "London Journal" in 1726, "Town Talk" i the "Reader" in the same year, the "Club-Lc in 1785, and "Hours of Leisure" (Leisure H 1806? We have had "Quiz" and the "Ma Moon" a hundred years ago, and their nam been recently again used. We have had "Wat "Reapers," "Triflers," "Bees," "Farragos," " On," "Cabinets," "Sylphs," "Censors," "Int "Whisperers," "Speculators," "Flâneurs," "Ba "Advisers," "Bachelors," "Templars," "Dre "Fools," "Praters," "Prattlers," "Old Maids," " "Tatlers," "Tatlers Revived," "Visitors," "Pro and lastly, the "Tea Table," the "Lover," "Spinster." There were others, too, with mor tionable names; for in the list of 212 are to b many foolish notions, and much that is simpl silly, puerile, and ridiculous.

After Steele and Addison the essayists deger until the time of Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), the "Rambler" and "Idler (folio, 1751), ag deavoured to become a week-day preacher. Th however, of Johnson, one of the most valuable *is heavy*, ponderous, solid, and his notions

always happy in their conceptions. Yet, says a writer, Mr. John R. Butlin, F.S.A., "there is far greater power in these essays—scribbled off often in a moment's notice, by a writer who in this manner earned his daily bread—than in the whole of the "Spectator." There is imagination, and learning, and a depth of thought far greater than any to which Addison and Steele could lay claim. Our attention is arrested in spite of the defects of an unattractive style. We feel that the writer possesses a far deeper knowledge of the human heart than his more brilliant predecessors. The influence of books on the mind has been much exaggerated; but it is difficult to imagine that any one can rise from the perusal of the "Rambler" without becoming a wiser and a better man.

Heavy as Johnson's style undoubtedly is (a modification of it exists still in some of our leading newspapers and reviews), there is so much real feeling and truth in it that it will always excite our admiration. Johnson has been not unwisely selected as the ideal of a sturdy Englishman; and, although he is ponderous, he is always straightforward and manly. He has no fun and humour; if he dances, he dances as it were like a bear in fetters; but to relieve this he has a great deal of a certain kind of fancy, and a learned grace that is not by any means unpleasing. Far lighter reading than his essays, and yet it may be much wiser, greater, and wider, is his familiar talk, collected by Boswell, and published in his "Life." This book should undoubtedly be read by the self-improver. Its style is glittering, witty, full of movement and life. One does not so much read as hear Johnson and his friends—probably the wisest and best men then alive,

even fully remembering the King (a good man), divines, and the whole bench of bishops—t debate those things which are most interes humanity. One sees how thoroughly John a-head of all men as a conversationalist, how gingly he loved and pursued truth, how good and brave the man was; how true and simp quick always to beat down casuistry, and ins correct in seizing the point in all controvers full of learning, prodigious in memory, and re resource. Goldsmith said that his retorts were at hand that even if he were in the wrong his o got the worst of it—"if he misses fire with h he knocks you down with the butt-end." But these years, if we coolly examine the questions we shall find that in nine cases out of ten was right as we argue from the head; in nin out of a hundred if we reason from the hea definitions are wonderful. Take a few hap He said of rich people retired from trade, "t have lost the civility of tradesmen, without a that of gentlemen." Can one say more in a Of a pompous small man in a clever company the conversation overflowed and *drowned hi* Jonas Hanway, who was fond of showing h "He acquired some reputation in travelling but lost it in travelling at home." Of Lord I that "he sat down to write a book and tell th what *the world had all his life been telling him.* dull fop—"That man possesses but one idea, *is a wrong one.*" The force of antithesis and co always admirable; the fun and humour that are *in his* more set and moral writings are abundan

"Pray who is that man that is gone out?" asked a company, but none could answer, until Johnson, taking his pipe from his mouth, said, gravely, "he did not care to speak ill of any man behind his back, but he believed the gentleman was an *attorney*." Added to these gay and humorous sentences are others of the weightiest knowledge, the deepest faith, the sublimest patience, and of such true wisdom, that one perpetually wonders where the good man got it all, until we remember how constantly he prayed, how earnestly he read his Bible, how good and charitable he was. Suffering from a severe nervous affection, and in the early part of his life prostrated with poverty and domestic cares, yet this poor schoolmaster stood like a strong tower of defence, four square to the winds of witty blasphemy, rich and powerful infidelity, carelessness, folly, and licentiousness, and beat back from our shores the flood of French impiety with which the school of Voltaire would otherwise have flooded us. If those who came to scoff did not remain to pray, at any rate none dared to profess infidelity in conversation or in print before so ardent, so earnest, so powerful, and so burly a champion. To Samuel Johnson, one of the best, bravest and noblest of Englishmen, England owes much—more than she can easily repay.

Johnson's preface to his edition of Shakespeare perhaps best exhibits the powers of the great doctor as a critical essayist. Here is an extract from it:—

"Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the

world; by the peculiarities of studies or profes which can operate but upon small numbers; or l accidents of transient fashions or temporary opi they are the genuine progeny of common hun such as the world will always supply, and obse will always find. His persons act and speak influence of those general passions and princi which all minds are agitated, and the whole sy life is continued in motion. In the writings o poets a character is too often an individual, in t Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

"It is from this wide extension of design that s instruction is derived. It is this which fills th of Shakespeare with practical axioms and d wisdom. It was said of Euripides that every ve a precept; and it may be said of Shakespea from his works may be collected a system and economical prudence. Yet his real powe shown in the splendour of particular passages, the progress of his fable and the tenor of his di and he that tries to recommend him by sele tations will succeed, like the pedant in Hierocl when he offered his house to sale carried a b his pocket as a specimen. . . .

"Other dramatists can only gain attention by bolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous a exampled excellence or depravity, as the wri barbarous romances invigorated the reader by and a dwarf; and he that should form his expec of human affairs from the play, or from the tale be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no l his scenes are occupied only by men, who a *speak as the* reader thinks that he should hims

spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents, so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarises the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials to which it cannot be exposed.

"This, therefore, is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions. . . .

"The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare."

Other essayists—especially one, Oliver Goldsmith, whose "Citizen of the World" is a most delightful book—may be read; and perhaps the "World" and the "Connoisseur" may be dipped into, and the "Man of Feeling," by Henry Mackenzie, perused; and then the essayists of more modern times—Hazlitt's "Round Table," Leigh Hunt's "Indicator," Charles Lamb's "*Essays of Elia*," the most charming and delightful of

literary essays, and perhaps the very first characteri writing that we have. Then, with a glance at "Fri in Council," "Guesses at Truth," and some of essays of the popular writers of the day, our improver will have safely landed in modern times, will be able to understand why the novelist, firs historical and then the humorous dealer in pure fic threw the essayist into the shade, and absorbed popularity which is necessary for the existence writer.[1]

[1] Having regard to a fair exemplification of the various of essay, and to the limits of space at my disposal, I hav fined my extracts from the essayists to Bacon, Overbury, A and Steele, and Johnson. The specimens from these five w will generally, it is hoped, be found sufficiently characteri this pleasing and instructive species of literary composition.

Chapter IX.

THE RISE OF THE DRAMA—DRAMATIC LITERATURE.

IT is a much more difficult thing to tell people what to read than to tell them what has been written; and in reading these papers, which have been composed to the end that, in a greater or less degree, both these objects may be attained, it will be well if the reader remember the principal difficulty which besets the present writer in his task.

Dramatic literature is so large and essential a part of the literature of all civilized countries, that the history of religion, politics, social advancement, and, much more, the manners of a people, cannot be known without reading many of the plays which have been produced by it. England's dramatic writings are the finest that she can boast of, rich as she is in each variety of genius. The spirit of narrative literature, too, it must be added, is in itself essentially dramatic; that is, the author of a good novel, or of a tale for children, *must have* dramatic power before he

can so enliven his narrative as to create an inte
the minds of his readers. Again, the historian i
or less of a dramatist; and just as he is gifte
that power, he fails or he succeeds. The biog
again is in the same strait. If his dramatic inst
large enough to endow the character he desca
or describes, with vivacity of expression, rea
being, and what is shortly termed life, he succe
not, he fails. And this dramatic instinct is so
that from Plato, in his "Apology of Socrate
"Banquet," and in "Theatetus," to the latest an
specimen of biography, we find the writer taking
in dramatic dialogue, which gives—as in Bo
"Life of Johnson"—a vivid and ever-living inte
the pictures that he draws.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding this neces
the drama, we find in English society, or in man
of it, a general distaste for, and a suspicion o
matic writings, because many plays abound in
tionable situations, and in dialogue that is, to s
least, often illustrated with impure images. These
are in part, no doubt, owing to the actors them
and to the license of the stage. It would be abs
deny them, but at the same time it is more abs
be frightened at them. We are not frightened
Bible because it continually speaks in the p
terms of the sins of men and women. Perfect
rance of evil is just as impossible as it would b
less. Ignorance is never innocence, and, bearin
in mind, we may safely trust to the shield of
purity, and the elevation of the mind which fin
rature gives, and proceed with the study of the D

It is not our purpose here to study deeply the

They have had their origin in all countries—
Persia, and in Greece. They seem to have
in pastoral communities, and to have been
al way of amusement resorted to by shep-
er their games. From the actors' faces being
with lees of wine, or with the blood of goats
the feast, we have the words "tragedy" and
'; and in some disguise, some rude dress,
othurnus to heighten the figure, or low sock to
the actor to skip about nimbly, we have the
of the tragic mask, the fixed stare, the "sock"
comedian, and the "buskin" of the tragic actor.
in Greece and in England, the people of which
ries resembled each other in many points, plays
originally one of the agents of the priests or
y in educating their people, and it seems to be a
sad thing that even now the Drama is not made
t it can so well be—an educational agent; for—

> What pulpits reach not, and would fail to reach,
> The stage, well purified, would safely teach.

he earliest species of drama known in England was
which was designated by the term "Miracle Plays
Mysteries," in which the life of our Saviour, the Crea-
of the world, the intimate relation of the soul of
n to his Maker, and the continual struggle between
dness and wickedness were taught. We first hear
them in the midland counties. At Dunstable, in
9, a play on the story of St. Catherine was acted;
m 1268 to 1577 similar productions were presented at
ester. During that time, and still later, others were
ed at Coventry, a city which still boasts of a public
matic procession, that of Godiva; and at length

every town in England, and even in Scotland saw something of them. The Saviour, the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and even the Deity was personally introduced; the Crucifixion was simulated, and running through most of the plays was "The Vice," or the Devil, the Spirit of Wickedness, a sarcastic villain, always ready to sneer and gird at virtue, but in the end generally sent to Hell for his punishment. Thus forcibly and no doubt to a rude audience effectually, the triumph of Virtue over Wickedness was taught and set forth. As in those early times very few persons could read, and as the eye always faithfully interprets and constantly retains what it sees, no doubt these rude plays were a powerful element in the education of the people. In those "good" old days the blessings of the newspaper press and of penny journalism did not exist. The priest and the dramatist, often one and the same person, were the sole instructors of the people.

About the reign of Henry VI.—King of France and England, and crowned King of France in Paris itself—the Drama had advanced from being a mere religious teacher into the position of a moral and sentimental instructor. The Deity and Hierarchy are no longer found in plays and abstract ideas or sentiments—Mercy, Freedom, Truth, Justice—are substituted, and begin to take rude form as characters. But the Old Vice, the Devil, is still retained, and finally takes the shape of the Jester or Clown. Then came Interludes in which real characters are introduced; and one of the first and most important of these written (1521) by John Heywood, *temp.* Henry VIII. is called "The *Four* P's" being a dialogue between a Palmer, a

rdoner, a Poticary, and a Pedler, as to who shall l the biggest lie. The Palmer wins by an assertion ıt he never saw a woman out of patience. Here :n we have a kind of satirical farce, written in awk- rd, long, lilting rhyme, but with sufficient character make it a valuable picture of manners. Nicholas dall, Master of Eton and Westminster Schools (1506- 56), wrote the first regular comedy, "Ralph Royster oyster." Udall's production has thirteen characters hibiting the middle classes of Henry VIII.'s time, is five regular acts, and has a plot, and in plan and ecution, everything being taken into account, is as mplete as any play in the language. Next we have Gammer Gurton's Needle," a somewhat inferior y (about 1566), accredited, but on very slender dence, to John Still (1543-1607), afterwards Bishop Bath and Wells. This contains some well-sketched racters, although the humour is lower than that ch our pantomimic writers now indulge in. It will seen that Comedy was the first portion of the re- ar Drama in England; afterwards Tragedy, taken re directly from the plays and stories of Rome l Greece, was introduced by Thomas Sackville, rl of Dorset, of whom mention has already been de. His tragedy of "Gorboduc," in which he was isted by Thomas Norton, is written in really very e blank verse, such as the following:—

> Your grace should now, in these grave years of yours,
> Have found ere this the price of mortal joys;
> How short they be, how fading here on earth
> How full of change, how little our estate:
> Of nothing sure save only of the death
> To whom both man and all the world doth owe
> *Their end at last.*

Several members of the Universities and of the Inns of Court, to whom, then as now, literature was a resort to publish their names, or to get some little money, wrote "Damon and Pythias," "Tancred and Gismunda," and other old plays to be found in Dodsley's Collection, and largely quoted in "Lamb's Specimens of Early English Dramatic Poets," to which the student is referred for a fuller acquaintance with this portion of the subject. These plays are rather to be glanced at and tasted here and there, than read. Greene (1560-1592), Peele (1552-1598), Lodge (died 1625), Nash (1567-1600), Lyly (author of "Euphues and his England"), (1553-1601) and Kyd (reign of Elizabeth), are the names of dramatists and poets of very considerable power, but only fitted to lie in public libraries, and not of sufficient importance to occupy the *general* student's attention after the greater dramatists which succeeded them. It is a common-place but sufficient illustration of such to say that when the sun of Shakespeare arose these lesser planets paled their ineffectual fires, which grew obscure by the side of the greater luminary; yet there is one of his predecessors at least, that should be read—Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), who has left eight plays, some of them an exceedingly bombastic nature, such as "Tamburlaine the Great," but others of so great a force, originality, fire, and splendour, that the lines seem to burn and throb with an intense life. "The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus," by Marlowe, is a play exhibiting the ambition of one who sells his soul to the devil to gratify his passions; and the misery and torment of the result are drawn with the strongest possible colours. There are, too, in Marlowe's plays many passages of

: poetical excellence; and it is not too much
ıt Shakespeare, while avoiding his extreme
was lifted by his example into those high em-
gions of poetry which he alone has touched.
Charles Lamb, speaking of the tragedy of
d II.": "The reluctant pangs of abdicating
in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare
improved in his 'Richard II.;' and the death-
f Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond
ene, ancient and modern, with which I am ac-
ed." There is a directness of purpose too in
we, which is very Shakespearian. He arrives, *per
', at what he wishes to convey. Thus, when
istophilus calls up Helen of Troy, at the Doctor's
st, Faustus, instead of describing her beauty, con-
it at once to the spectators in these singularly
iful and forcible lines:—

> Is this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
> And burn'd the topless towers of Ilium!
> Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

we's was an unhappy life, and a sad death; but
ot too much to say that, while exhibiting the
est contrasts, his "Faustus" is fully worthy of
g with Goethe's "Faust," which he anticipated by
y years.

s not easy to make a suitable extract from Mar-
so as to show the poet in his best vein, and to
his extravagance and exaggeration; the following,
er, is from his "Edward the Second," and
e considered a fair specimen; it is the opening
scene between the King and Leicester, near the
f *the play*:—

Leices. Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament;
Imagine Killingworth Castle were your court,
And that you lay for pleasure here a space,
Not of compulsion or necessity.
K. Edw. Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows,
For kind and loving hast thou always been.
The griefs of private men are soon allay'd;
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds;
But when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
[And], highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air;
And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
Th' ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,
And that unnatural queen, false Isabel,
That thus hath pent and mew'd me in a prison;
For such outrageous passions cloy my soul,
As with the wings of rancour and disdain
Full oft[ten] am I soaring up to heaven,
To plain[1] me to the gods against them both.
But when I call to mind I am a king,
Methinks I should revenge me of my wrongs,
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
But what are kings, when regiment[2] is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule; I bear the name of king;
I wear the crown, but am controll'd by them,
By Mortimer, and my unconstant queen,
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy;
Whilst I am lodged within this cave of care,
Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,
To company my heart with sad laments,
That bleeds within me for this sad exchange.

Here are a few lines from his "Tamburlair Great"—the description of the hero of the play

Cosroe. Thus far are we towards Theridamas,
And valiant Tamburlaine, the man of fame,
The man that in the forehead of his fortune
Rears figures of renown and miracle.
But tell me, that hast seen him, Menaphon,
What stature wields he, and what personage?

[1] Complain. [2] Government.

Menaphon. Of stature tall, and straightly fashion'd,
Like his desire, lift upwards and divine ;
So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
Old Atlas' burden ; 'twixt his manly pitch,[1]
A pearl more worth than all the world is placed,
Wherein by curious sovereignty of art
Are fix'd his piercing instruments of sight,
Whose fiery circles bear encompassed
A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,
That guides his steps and actions to the throne
Where honour sits invested royally ;
Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
Thirsting with sovereignty and love of arms ;
His lofty brows in folds do figure death,
And in their smoothness amity and life ;
About them hangs a knot of amber hair,
Wrappèd in curls as fierce Achilles' was,
On which the breath of heaven delights to play,
Making it dance with wanton majesty ;
His arms and fingers long and sinewy,
Betokening valour and excess of strength ;—
In every part proportion'd like the man
Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine.[2]

Born at Stratford-on-Avon in 1564, and there dying 1616, William Shakespeare (who some would have believe was an unlettered peasant, but whose father proved, by undoubted evidence, to have been a man some substance—a freeholder and trader, who had en high-bailiff of the town) produced in twenty-three ars, 1591-1614, thirty-seven plays of the very highest ler of merit, which are now, and will remain always, e wonder of the world. There is in them a depth wisdom, with glimpses of learning, void of the parade d ostentation characteristic of the schools, contin- lly accompanied by the profoundest thought that er proceeded from the human brain. At him, not the

[1] Shoulders.
[2] These two specimens have been taken from the Rev. Alexander Dyce's excellent edition of the works of Marlowe.

quidnuncs of a village, but the wisest an
the earth wonder, as did the hinds in
poem at the village schoolmaster :—

> And still they gazed, and still the wonder
> That one small head could carry all he kn

And this wonder is continually increasing.
been so puzzled with the phenomenon th
supposed that several men wrote the pl
Shakespeare put his name to them ; oth
Bacon alone could have written them ;
Shakespeare, the manager of a theatre,
of poor scholars. But all these theories a
futed, and when exposed are in themselv

Not only was Shakespeare well known,
surrounded by his contemporaries, frien
mies, but the plays are consistent one w
and the style of verse is at once so swee
and easy, so strong yet so harmonious, t
dents easily recognize the Shakespearia
account for his deep and intimate knowle
(for learning has been foolishly and impu
him) some of the wildest theories have be
Lord Campbell has endeavoured to prove
others have said he was a doctor. Dr.
brought all his learning and experience
to show how intimately Shakespeare und
ness. The goldsmith quotes him for hi
the statesman listens to his precepts, the
his golden sentences in the pulpit, the
the exchange, the lawyer at the bar, the
field. He seems to have happily anticip
coveries of some of the moderns, and h

wit are as fresh now as ever they were. His philosophy is deeper than that of Plato; his tenderness, Christian charity, and eloquence for the poor as golden as those of Chrysostom or Jeremy Taylor. He is not one, but many men. He has well been called the "myriad-minded man" because in him everybody finds himself reflected. Like a steam-hammer, that can flatten tons of iron at a blow, and yet descend so gently as to crack a nut, the wit of Shakespeare is so constituted that it can deal with, suggest, or answer the deepest and most ponderous of human questions, and yet can, the next moment, jest or pun upon the slightest subject. And it is hard to say what he does best; for, in spite of those who cannot understand the wit of Shakespeare's minor characters, those who do understand it are well aware that the fun (say, for instance, of Costard), is just as wonderful, as proper for, and as well fitted to the person as is the deepest philosophy of Hamlet or the statecraft of Wolsey. Then, again, in every play there is a crowd of characters, and each of these is a living person—just as much alive to us as was Dr. Johnson or George III., and indeed better known to us than many of our predecessors. Sometimes he gives us a character in a few words; indeed, volumes have been written upon these minor creations, in endeavouring to prove them more wonderful than the more finished and larger portraits. No English author has ever engaged so much attention in his own or in any other country. The Germans are almost as proud of him as we are, and have gone over every syllable he has written with a loving care; nay, they attribute to him eight doubtful plays, which we, as might be expected from our superior knowledge, very justly reject,

although it must be added that Mr. Dyce think
are weighty reasons for supposing that Shak
had a hand in the production of "The Two
Kinsmen." The French, a nation not much g
foreign literature, are beginning to appreciate h
the Italians also; while the Americans are p
have sprung from ancestors who were the cour
of the greatest, wisest, and gentlest Englishm
ever lived. John Dryden says of him, "He
man who, of all modern and perhaps ancien
had the largest and most comprehensive soul.
images of Nature were still present to him,
drew them not laboriously, but luckily. Wher
scribes anything, you more than see it—you
too. Those who accuse him to have wanted l
give him the greater commendation. He was n
learned; he needed not the spectacles of books
Nature. He looked inwards, and found her th
cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I
do him injury to compare him with the gre
mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; hi
degenerating into clenches, his serious swelli
bombast. But he is always great when som
occasion is presented to him. No man can
ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did n
raise himself as high above the rest of the poet

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi."

This character the somewhat prosaic Doctor J
calls "a perpetual model of encomiastic critic
act without minuteness, and lofty without exagge
So much, indeed, has been written about Shak
that editions of his works, and other works up

uld fill a very large house; and the wonder still ows. "It is we who are Shakespeare," said Coleridge, ing him as the one man who contained all the Eng- h nation. Yes, it is we, men and women too; for, til he wrote, the beauty, purity, nobility, and loving dness of woman had received but slight poetic ex- ssion. His servants are the best servants, his dairy- ids the freshest and prettiest, his hinds the quaintest l nattiest, his jesters the most piquant and wittiest, gentlemen and soldiers the bravest, his ladies the lest and fairest, his counsellors the most sage, and kings the most kingly upon earth. What a man what a woman should be, he knew; and this not of the greatest, but of the most vicious and de- led. To be compared to a gentleman as drawn Shakespeare, is the highest praise for man; to be alleled with one of Shakespeare's women, the finest pliment that can be paid to any lady in the land. Now, all this said, much more could be written; the poet went beyond the earth in his creations; or, Dr. Johnson, moved to fervour in the contemplation, l—

> Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new;

l this is no high-flown description, but simply the est truth. It follows, then, that the study of Shake- are should be one of the principal studies of our es. We should read him by day, and meditate on n by night. His lines are full of light, and of light at never leads astray. His purity is beyond praise, s proverbial wisdom wholesome, his religion sound. short, there are two books which, attentively died, *will teach us all* we want to know in this

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world; they are—the Bible, and the works of \
Shakespeare.[1]

[1] For an admirable edition of Shakespeare's text, c
blunders and crude conjectures, and enriched by acut
remarks, the student is referred to that of the Rev. A
Dyce (Lond. 1867). The Cambridge Shakespeare is
valuable, exhibiting not only the various readings of
copies, but also the conjectures and emendations of
mentators. Of the old *variorum* editions, the last an
Malone's, edited by Boswell (1821). Cheap, yet reliabl
of Shakespeare are the "Globe" (Macmillan), and the
Volume Shakespeare" (Bradbury and Co.). As quotati
this author are so common in school-books and elsewhe
been thought advisable to reserve valuable space for extr
works less generally known.

Chapter X.

DRAMATIC LITERATURE.

(*Continued.*)

HACKET, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, used this motto, no bad one: "Fear God and be cheerful;" and English intellect seems to have followed the advice through many ages. Hence, while we abound with livines and learned theologians, with grave tragedians, listinguished by deep thought and a continual and everential reference to the higher powers, we equally bound with comic writers, sketchers of manners, students of human nature, and those who observingly istil from life its cheerful, health-inspiring lessons, or ho move our laughter at its petty annoyances and ie humorous aspect of our countrymen.

Shakespeare was equally at home in tragedy or omedy; and, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has painted arrick, haled on one hand by Tragedy and on the her by Comedy, and not knowing which side to take,

Our greatest poet might be symbolically depicted, urdly knowing to which to devote his ever-present id *mighty genius.*

Following in his train come a crowd of writers, i
of whom certainly had commenced dramatic autho
before him, and of the more important of whon
may say, if time permit, the student should read
may be sure of finding in their tragedies elevated
pure thoughts, and in their comedies pastoral sc
or those drawn from the domestic and city life o
period, which will help him to understand the e
day and even the intellectual life of the great n
from which we are sprung.

Chapman, Middleton, Decker, Webster, Mar
Heywood, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massi
Ford, and Shirley are among the principal of these;
it is proposed to introduce them to the student in
order in which they are named, some of them n
sarily in brief fashion. It is just to add that the
is not a complete one: the merits of the minor p
wrights are not enlarged upon, though many of t
are superior to those who stood in the first rank in
period following the Restoration.

To George Chapman, as a dramatic writer, s
reference has already been made. He was the au
of seventeen plays, in some of which he was assi
by contemporaries. Charles Lamb says of him
he approaches nearest to Shakespeare in the des
tive and didactic, but that he did not excel in
matic imitation. He could not go out of himsel
Shakespeare could shift at pleasure to inform
animate other existences, but in himself he had ar
to perceive and a soul to embrace all forms. "I
often thought that the vulgar misconception of Sh
peare, as of a wild irregular genius, 'in whom
faults are compensated by great beauties,' woul

.lly true applied to Chapman." Little can be added this brief but judicious estimate. Chapman's Homeric .n occasionally crops up in his plays, as, for instance, the following, from his "Byron's Conspiracy:"—

> As when the moon hath comforted the night,
> And set the world in silver of her light,
> The planets, asterisms, and whole state of heaven,
> In beams of gold descending: all the winds
> Bound up in caves, charged not to drive abroad
> Their cloudy heads: a universal peace
> (Proclaim'd in silence) of the quiet earth:
> Soon as her hot and dry fumes are let loose,
> Storms and clouds mixing suddenly put out
> The eyes of all those glories; the creation
> Turn'd into chaos; and we then desire,
> For all our joy of life, the death of sleep.
> So when the glories of our lives (men's loves,
> Clear consciences, our fames and loyalties,)
> That did us worthy comfort, are eclipsed,
> Grief and disgrace invade us; and for all
> Our night of life besides, our misery craves
> Dark earth would ope, and hide us in our graves.

Thomas Middleton, the date of whose birth is not own with any certainty, but who died about the year 26, is the author of some thirty dramatic produc- ns. In many of these, like Chapman and other of s literary brethren, as was common at the time, he s only joint partner. His principal piece is entitled The Witch," and is full of great creative talent. ost of Middleton's productions are pervaded with a mic vein, in which he surpassed many of his con- mporaries. Mr. Dyce has published an excellent dition of his works.

Ben Jonson's famous antagonist, Thomas Decker, as perhaps fallen into greater oblivion than his con- st with the author of "The Poetaster" would seem warrant; *for in his* dramas are to be found some

elegant bits of fancy and pathos, marred very much at times by the vulgar and licentious language prevalent at the period. Hazlitt has spoken of his merits in extremely eulogistic terms, selecting for particular commendation "The Honest Whore." The plots of Decker's plays are generally ill-managed, and he seems to have bestowed little care on the mechanical niceties of his art. His "Old Fortunatus" and his share of "Patient Grissil," however, should still keep him fresh in our remembrance. The date of Decker's birth is unknown, but he died somewhere about 1640.

The following is an extract from Decker's "Old Fortunatus," and embraces the scene between the goddess Fortune and Fortunatus:—

Fortune. Before thy soul at this deep lottery
Draw forth her prize, ordain'd by destiny,
Know that here's no recanting a first choice.
Choose then discreetly: for the laws of fate,
Being graven in steel, must stand inviolate.
Fortunat. Daughters of Jove and the unblemish'd Night,
Most righteous Parcæ, guide my genius right:
Wisdom, Strength, Health, Beauty, Long Life and Riches.
Fortune. Stay, Fortunatus; once more hear me speak.
If thou kiss Wisdom's cheek and make her thine,
She'll breathe into thy lips divinity,
And thou (like Phœbus) shall speak oracle;
Thy heaven-inspirèd soul on Wisdom's wings
Shall fly up to the Parliament of Jove,
And read the Statutes of Eternity,
And see what's past and learn what is to come.
If thou lay claim to Strength, armies shall quake
To see thee frown: as kings at mine do lie,
So shall thy feet trample on empery.
Make Health thine object, thou shalt be strong proof
'Gainst the deep-searching darts of surfeiting,
Be ever merry, ever revelling.
Wish but for Beauty, and within thine eyes
Two naked Cupids amorously shall swim,
And on thy cheeks I'll mix such white and red
That Jove shall turn away young Ganymede,

And with immortal arms shall circle thee.
Are thy desires Long Life? thy vital thread
Shall be stretch'd out; thou shalt behold the change
Of monarchies, and see those children die
Whose great-great-grandsires now in cradles lie.
If through Gold's sacred hunger thou dost pine,
Those gilded wantons which in swarms do run
To warm their slender bodies in the sun
Shall stand for number of those golden piles
Which in rich pride shall swell before thy feet;
As those are, so shall these be infinite.

Fortunat. O, whither am I rapt beyond myself?
More violent conflicts fight in every thought
Than his whose fatal choice Troy's downfall wrought.
Shall I contract myself to Wisdom's love?
Then I love Riches; and a wise man poor
Is like a sacred book that's never read;
To himself he lives and to all else seems dead.
This age thinks better of a gilded fool
Than of a threadbare saint in Wisdom's school.
I will be strong: then I refuse Long Life;
And though mine arm should conquer twenty worlds,
There's a lean fellow beats all conquerors;
The greatest strength expires with loss of breath,
The mightiest in one minute stoop to death.
Then take Long Life, or Health; should I do so,
I might grow ugly, and that tedious scroll
Of months and years much misery may enrol:
Therefore I'll beg for Beauty; yet I will not:
The fairest cheek hath oftentimes a soul
Leprous as sin itself, than hell more foul.
The Wisdom of this world is idiotism;
Strength a weak reed: Health Sickness' enemy,
And it at length will have the victory.
Beauty is but a painting; and Long Life
Is a long journey in December gone,
Tedious and full of tribulation.
Therefore, dread sacred empress, make me rich;
My choice is store of Gold; the rich are wise:
He that upon his back rich garments wears
Is wise, though on his head grow Midas' ears.
Gold is the strength, the sinews of the world;
The health, the soul, the beauty most divine;
A mask of gold hides all deformities;
Gold is heaven's physic, life's restorative;
O, therefore, make me rich!

John Webster, in reply to a charge that he was long in finishing his tragedies, confessed that he did not "write with a goose-quill winged with two feathers;" and it is perhaps owing to the circumstance intended to be expressed in this metaphor, that we have from his hands but eight dramatic pieces, in the composition of four of which he received the assistance of some of his fellows. His two principal tragedies are "Vittoria Corombona, or the White Devil," and "The Duchess of Malfy." This latter piece still holds its place on our stage. Webster, in dramatic construction and arrangement, certainly excels many of his contemporaries; and in "moving a horror skilfully," as Charles Lamb expresses it, he is approached by none of them but Ford. The play of the "White Devil" is full of eloquent passages and striking images —indeed these characteristics are prominent throughout Webster's chief works. Here are one or two instances. First, a dirge:—

> Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
> Since o'er shady groves they hover,
> And with flowers and leaves do cover
> The friendless bodies of unburied men.
> Call unto his funeral dole
> The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
> To raise him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
> And, when gay tombs are robb'd, sustain no harm;
> But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
> For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

On portraits of women:—

> Must you have my picture?
> You will enjoin me to a strange punishment.
> With what a compelled face a woman sits
> While she is drawing! I have noted divers
> Either to feign smiles, or suck in the lips,
> To have a little mouth; ruffle the cheeks,

To have the dimple seen; and so disorder
The face with affectation, at next sitting
It has not been the same. I have known others
Have lost the entire fashion of their face
In half an hour's sitting—in hot weather—
The painting on their face has been so mellow,
They have left the poor man harder work by half
To mend the copy he wrought by. But indeed,
If ever I would have mine drawn to the life,
I would have a painter steal at such a time
I were devoutly kneeling it at my prayers;
There is then a heavenly beauty in't, the soul
Moves in the superficies.

'arental fondness is thus forcibly depicted. Virginius ddresses his daughter:—

Farewell, my sweet Virginia, never, never,
Shall I taste fruit of the most blessèd hope
I had in thee. Let me forget the thought
Of thy most pretty infancy; when first,
Returning from the wars, I took delight
To rock thee in my target; when my girl
Would kiss her father in his burjanet
Of glittering steel, hung 'bout his armed neck,
And, viewing the bright metal, smile to see
Another fair Virginia smile on thee;
When I first taught thee how to go, to speak;
And (when my wounds have smarted) I have sung
With an unskilful, yet a willing voice,
To bring my girl asleep. O my Virginia,
When we begun to be, begun our woes;
Increasing still, as dying life still grows.

John Marston shared with Decker the honour (or otherwise) of figuring in Jonson's "Poetaster," where they are both soundly ridiculed; but Marston was no contemptible rival of the great Ben. His works, which occupy three octavo volumes, include several plays of somewhat unequal merit, of which he was author either in whole or part; besides a collection of coarse but powerful satires, entitled "The Scourge of Villany." His plays contain many fine passages like

the following:—"a fool's beatitude" (Antonio's Revenge):—

> Note a fool's beatitude:
> He is not capable of passion;
> Wanting the power of distinction,
> He bears an unturn'd sail with every wind:
> Blow east, blow west, he steers his course alike.
> I never saw a fool lean: the chub-faced fop
> Shines sleek with full-cramm'd fat of happiness.
> Whilst studious contemplation sucks the juice
> From wizard's * cheeks, who making curious search
> For nature's secrets, the First Innating Cause
> Laughs them to scorn, as man doth busy apes
> When they will zany † men.

Thomas Heywood, "a sort of prose Shakespeare," to take Lamb's estimate, was perhaps the most prolific writer of any of the dramatists of this period. He states himself that he was more or less concerned in the immense number of two hundred and twenty pieces, not a tenth part of which have come down to us. In addition to these pieces he was the author of several voluminous works in prose and verse, including two poems, each filling a folio volume! Heywood's plays are full of telling situations, brought about by much dramatic skill; and his language is at times very eloquent and pathetic. His "Woman Kill'd with Kindness" is an example of this last statement, and from it the two following extracts are given. Here is Frankford, the confiding husband, rejoicing too hastily perhaps, in his great felicity, and striking the keynote upon which the terrible interest of the story turns:—

> *Frankford.* How happy am I amongst other men,
> That in my mean estate embrace content!
> I am a gentleman, and by my birth

* *i. e.* wise men's. † Zany, imitate.

Companion with a king; a king's no more,
I am possess'd of many fair revenues,
Sufficient to maintain a gentleman.
Touching my mind, I am studied in all arts;
The riches of my thoughts, and of my time,
Have been a good proficient; but the chief
Of all the sweet felicities on earth,
I have a fair, a chaste, a loving wife;
Perfection all, all truth, all ornament.
If man on earth may truly happy be,
Of these at once possess'd, sure, I am he.

As the play draws near its climax Frankford's servant tells him of his wife's infidelity:—

Frank. Thou hast kill'd me with a weapon whose sharp point
Ih prick'd quite through and through my shivering heart.
Ips of cold sweat sit dangling on my hairs,
e morning's dew upon the golden flowers;
I I am plunged into strange agonies.
at dids't thou say? If any word that touch'd
credit or her reputation,
s as hard to enter my belief
Dives into Heaven.
Nicholas. I can gain nothing: they are two
it never wrong'd me. I knew before
as but a thankless office, and perhaps
much as is my service, or my life is worth:
this I know, but this, and more,
re by a thousand dangers could not hire me
smother such a heinous wrong from you.
w, and I have said.
Frank. 'Tis probable; though blunt, yet he's honest.
ugh I durst pawn my life, and on her faith
ard the dear salvation of my soul,
in my trust I may be too secure.
y this be true? Oh, may it? Can it be?
t by any wonder possible?
n, woman, what thing mortal can we trust,
en friends and bosom wives prove so unjust!
at instance hast thou of this strange report?
Nich. Eyes, master, eyes.
Frank. Thy eyes may be deceiv'd, I tell thee;
should an angel from the heavens drop down,
I preach this to me that thyself hath told,
should have *much ado to win belief;*
oth their loves I am so confident.

Nich. Shall I discuss the same by circumstance?
Frank. No more! To supper, and command your fellc
To attend us and the strangers. Not a word,
I charge thee, on thy life; be secret, then,
For I know nothing.
Nich. I am dumb. Now that I have eased my stomach
I will go fill my stomach.
Frank. Away! begone!
She is well born, descended nobly,
Virtuous her education; her repute
Is in the general voice of all the country
Honest and fair; her carriage, her demeanour,
In all the actions that concern the love
To me, her husband, modest, chaste, and godly.
Is all this seeming gold plain copper?
But he, that Judas that hath borne my purse,
Hath sold me for a sin. O God! O God!
Shall I put up these wrongs? No. Shall I trust
The bare report of this suspicious groom,
Before the double gilt, the well-hatched ore,
Of their two hearts? No. I will lose these thoughts;
Distraction I will banish from my brow,
And from my looks exile sad content;
Their wonted favours in my tongue shall flow:
Till I know all, I'll nothing seem to know.

To Ben Jonson, born in 1574, ten years after
speare, a pupil at Westminster School, where
ginal talents were noticed by the great Camd
been assigned the second place in our dramatic
ture. Jonson, of Scottish origin, (the son of a
man, of a Scots family, from Annandale, if w
receive the testimony of Drummond of Hawtho
was a learned, serious, heavy writer in his tra
transfusing into them not only the spirit b
method of thought of his Latin originals;
his comedies a humorous, brilliant, painstakii
thoughtful poet; at times, satirical, biting, sava
proud to those of his contemporaries who dre
his wrath upon their heads. Jonson has been c
with some of the worst failings of humanity—y

rreligion, arrogance, jealousy—and with being ılly at war with his fellows. When it is stated : was the intimate and convivial companion kespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Cotton, , Martin, Donne; that he was ready at all times vard and assist deserving merit, and that notably ıt his help to Selden, Hacket, Raleigh, Hobbes; he has spoken in high terms of Selden, Camden, others; that in his works he always speaks with rence of the Creator—"the great and good God," e himself says, whom to think of "must straight melancholy be,"—when these statements are con-ered, the libels that have been cast upon him once disappear. He has also been charged with ıe-bibbing and gluttony. That he indulged to me extent in the enjoyments of life cannot be ques-ned; but so did Shakespeare, Selden, and others of ıs friends. The works, however, that he has left us stify to an arduous and laborious life, and give the attest contradiction possible to these two last calum-ies. After a perusal of Jonson's memoir by his ablest ditor, this great dramatist appears to us in the light f "the 'beloved servant' of his prince, the com-anion and friend of the nobility and gentry, and the knowledged head of the learned part of society;" say nothing of the fact that the "distinguished cha-cters of both sexes with whom he had grown old in constant intercourse of friendship and familiarity, men of genius and talents who succeeded them, hope and pride of the coming age, all flocked Jonson, all desired to become his 'sons,' all looked to him for encouragement and advice, and all asted of the *pleasure* and advantage derived from

his society." Jonson took his names
from the nature of his puppets—Bobadil
Mammon, Subtle, Pertinax, Surly, and C
and his comedies abound in truthful delin
humorous, foibles, affections, and weakne
to humanity. His five great comedies,
in his Humour," "Every Man out of l
"Volpone, or the Fox," "Epicœne, c
Woman," and the "Alchemist" are splen
of this, and show us, better than any h
sibly can, the sort of people the Eng
the days of Elizabeth and James I.;
'The Alchemist,' and 'Silent Woman,
Jonson, and outdone by no man," s
Hallam ("History of Literature of Europ
his first comedy, written at the early a
two, "is an extraordinary monument of g
is seldom the possession of youth, a clear
description of human character, various, a
vagant beyond the necessities of the sta
had learned his art from Aristophanes,
Terence; and it is well to mark the differ
his comedy and that of Shakespeare; it i
study English character in his pages. N
dependent, a humourist, that is, an origi
of thought, and not fond of travelling i
track; honourable; careless to gain or
terous, rough, warm-hearted; slow at en
quarrel, yet ready to bear himself bravel
loyal to his king, fond of dress, mone
extravagance, and, above all, a worship
the English character had a vigour and
must in general command our admiration.

of dramatic representation—to which reference will again be made—in his later period Jonson made so entirely his own, that it may be said to have died out with him; for even the "Comus" of Milton will scarcely bear comparison, in certain theatrical respects, with the beautiful Masques which he composed for the entertainment of the Court and nobility. As Lord Bacon said of them, they were written for princes, and by princes they were played. The sound deep genius of Jonson, and his masculine strength and independence, earned him a name which he will never lose—that which Sir John Young, without much premeditation, and for a few pence, had engraved on a common flagstone, but which conveys more to the mind than a tombstone full of panegyric—"O RARE BEN JONSON!"

The following from the "Poetaster" possesses special interest, as it is the poet's defence of his own character. Virgil is the speaker.

"First you must know
That where there is a true and perfect merit
There can be no dejection; and the scorn
Of humble baseness oftentimes so works
In a high soul, upon the grosser spirit,
That, to his blear'd and offended sense,
There seems a hideous fault blazed in the object,
When only the disease is in his eyes.
Here hence it comes our Horace now stands tax'd
Of impudence, self-love, and arrogance,
By those who share no merit in themselves;
And therefore think his portion is as small.
For they, from their own guilt, assure their souls,
If they should confidently praise their works,
In them it would appear inflation:
Which in a full and well-digested man,
Cannot receive that foul abusive name,
But the fair title of erection.
And for his true use of translating men,

It still hath been a work of as much palm,
In clearest judgments, as to invent or make
His sharpness,—that is most excusable;
As being forced out of a suffering virtue,
Oppressed with the license of the time:
And howsoever fools or jerking pedants,
Players, or such like buffoon barking wits
May with their beggarly and barren trash
Tickle base vulgar ears, in their despite,
This, like Jove's thunder, shall their pride contrc
"The honest satire hath the happiest soul."

The ensuing passage from "Every Man Humour," will show Jonson's skill in comic p we have here the character of a swaggering cap

Wellbred. Captain Bobadil, why muse you so?

Bobadil. Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honoura of service was performed to-morrow, being St. Mark's c be some ten years now.

E. Knowell. In what place, captain?

Bob. Why, at the beleaguering of Strigonium, wher than two hours seven hundred resolute gentlemen as an Europe lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, g it was the first but the best leaguer that ever I beheld v eyes, except the taking-in [conquest] of—what do yo last year, by the Genoways; but that, of all other, was fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was ranged in, si bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentl a soldier?

Stephen. So! I had as lief as an angel [a coin so could swear as well as that gentleman.

Know. Then you were a servitor, at both, it seems; nium, and *what do you call 't?*

Bob. O Lord, sir! By Saint George, I was the that entered the breach; and had I not effected it v lution, I had been slain, if I had a million of lives.

E. Know. 'Twas pity you had not ten; a cat's and y i' faith. But was it possible?

Mat. Pray you, mark this discourse, sir.

Steph. So I do.

Bob. I assure you, upon my reputation, 'tis true, an shall confess.

E. Know. (*aside*) You must bring me to the rack firs

Bob. Observe me, judicially, sweet sir; they had pl *three* demi-culverins just in the mouth of the breach,

ɜ to give on, their master-gunner (a man of no mean
mark, you must think) confronts me with his linstock,
give fire; I spying his intendment, discharged my
ı his bosom, and with these single arms, my poor rapier,
tly upon the Moors that guarded the ordnance, and put
ıell to the sword.
ɔ the sword! To the rapier, captain.
w. O, it was a good figure observed, sir: but did you
ptain, without hurting your blade?
ithout any impeach o' the earth; you shall perceive,
his rapier). It is the most fortunate weapon that ever
ır gentleman's thigh. Shall I tell you, sir? You talk
y, Excalibar, Durindana, or so; tut! I lend no credit
fabled of 'em: I know the virtue of mine own, and
dare the boldlier maintain it.

Chapter XI.

DRAMATIC LITERATURE

(Continued.)

BEAUMONT and Fletcher, two g
who wrote some admirable p
now much neglected, because
free and licentious, were once c
far superior to Shakespeare, esp
depicting the manners of gentlemen. But th
Dryden's time, when English morals were in
cadence. They are also easily to be recalled
in a literary partnership, and always to be a
throughout succeeding ages. Often licentiou
language, their characters are, nevertheles
elevated, pure; and, as they were perhaps in
Shakespeare, so they seem to have caught
much of his free, open, and generous charact
were, says a critic, "*gentlemen* who wrote for
as gentlemen have rarely done before or sir
the sneer at our dramatists is not wholly un
They wrote conjointly, and sometimes sepa

fifty-two plays; and Shakespeare himself is
the title-page of the first edition—to have
letcher in one, "The two Noble Kinsmen."
now seldom acted, there is such pure poetry,
dealised truth of character, such quickness,
s, brilliancy, and playfulness of thought, such
f sweet pathos, and so much airy liveliness
ialogue, that their plays are charming read-
when reading them we can only sigh (if we
ı to be true pictures) for the degenerate stu-
ɔur times, when the idiocy—selfish and wicked
ɔf the leading character is found to be divert-
he expression not of a chaste and noble love,
ɔld calculation as to winning a heavy bet or
an heiress, forms the brilliant dialogue of a
omedy. In Charles II.'s days Beaumont and
ı plays, more generally pleasing, but not so
:ched as those of Shakespeare, were so much
ɔular that Dryden relates that two of theirs
ɛd to one of his. Writers of the romantic
ıey have left us few comic characters which
ıs pictures of English men and women;
no doubt helped to give us that taste for the
ly sad, delicate, and pathetic kind of writing
: survives in our romances and novels.

Elder Brother" is justly esteemed as one of
:omedies in the works of our twin dramatists;
scene which the reader is about to peruse, is
t in the play. It should be premised that
the elder brother, being wholly given up to
nsents to sign away his birthright in favour
ɔunger son, Eustace, who is to be married to
ıngelica :—

Eustace. My father's here; my brother too,—that's a
Broke like a spirit from his cell.
Brisac. Come hither,
Come nearer, Charles; 'twas your desire to see
My noble daughter and the company,
And give your brother joy, and then to seal, boy.
You do like a good brother.
Louis. Marry, does he,
And he shall have my love for ever for 't—
Put to your hand now.
Notary. Here's the deed, sir, ready.
Charles. No, you must pardon me a while: I tell
I am in contemplation: do not trouble me.
Bri. Come, leave thy study, Charles.
Char. I'll leave m
I study now to be a man; I've found it.
Before what man was, was but my argument.
Miramont (*aside*). I like this best of all; he has ta
His dull mist flies away.
Eust. Will you write, brother?
Char. No, brother, no; I have no time for poor tl
I'm taking the height of that bright constellation.
Bri. I say you trifle time, son.
Char. I will not seal, sir
I am your eldest, and I'll keep my birthright!
For heaven forbid I should become example!
Had you only showed me land, I had delivered it,
And been a proud man to have parted with it;
'Tis dirt, and labour.—Do I speak right, uncle?
Mir. Bravely, my boy; and bless thy tongue!
Char. I'l
But you have opened to me such a treasure—
(I find my mind free; Heav'n direct my fortune!)—
Mir. Can he speak now? Is this a son to sacrific
Char. Such an inimitable piece of beauty,
That I have studied long, and now find only,
That I'll part sooner with my soul of reason,
And be a plant, a beast, a fish, a fly,
And only make the number of things up,
Than yield one foot of land, if she be tied to 't.
Louis. He speaks unhappily.[1]
Angelica. And, methinks, bra
He's the mere scholar!
Eust. You but vex yourself, broth
And vex your study too.

[1] Inauspiciously.

Go you and study;
ne, young Eustace; you want man and manners:
d both, although I made no show on't.
he volumes over I have read,
igest them, that they may grow in thee;
the tedious night with the dim lamp,
er lose the day than leave a doubt;
sweetness from the poets' spring,
to love; thou know'st not what fair is;
he stories of the great heroes,
and civil lives of good men walk through;
seen nothing but the face of countries,
ht home nothing but their empty words;
ld'st thou wear a jewel of this worth,
no worth within thee to preserve thee?

Beauty clear and fair, [*To Ang.*
Where the air
Rather like a perfume dwells;
Where the violet and the rose
Their blue veins in blush disclose,
And come to honour nothing else;

Where to live near,
And planted there,
Is to live, and still live new;
Where to gain a favour is
More than light, perpetual bliss,—
Make me live by serving you.

Dear, again back recall,
To this light,
A stranger to himself and all;
Both the wonder and the story
Shall be yours, and eke the glory:
I am your servant, and your thrall.

peak such another ode, and take all yet!—
you to the scholar now?
I wonder.—
brother, sir?
Yes, would he were buried!
make an ass of me, a younker.
peak not so softly, sir, 'tis very likely.
me, leave your finical talk, and let's despatch, Charles.
Despatch! what?
Why, the land.

Char. You are deceived, sir
Now I perceive what 'tis that woos a woman,
And what maintains her when she's woo'd ; I'll stop here.
A wilful poverty ne'er made a beauty,
Nor want of means maintain'd it virtuously :
Though land and moneys be no happiness,
Yet they are counted good conditions.
That use I'll make: he that neglects a blessing,
Though he want present knowledge how to use it,
Neglects himself.—May be, I have done you wrong, lady,
Whose love and hope went hand in hand together ;
May be, my brother, that has long expected
The happy hour, and bless'd my ignorance :—
Pray give me leave, sir, I shall clear all doubts.—
Why did they show me you? pray tell me that.
Mir. He'll talk thee into a pension for thy knavery.
Char. You, happy you ! why did you break unto me?
The rosy-finger'd morn ne'er broke so sweetly.
I am a man, and have desires within me,
Affections too, though they were drown'd awhile,
And lay dead, till the spring of beauty raised them :
Till I saw those eyes, I was but a lump,
A chaos of confusedness dwelt in me ;
Then from those eyes shot Love, and he distinguished,
And into form he drew my faculties ;
And now I know my land, and now I love too.
Bri. We had best remove the maid.
Char. It is too late, sir,
I have her figure here.—Nay, frown not, Eustace ;
There are less worthy souls for younger brothers :
This is no form of silk, but sanctity,
Which wild lascivious heats can never dignify.
Remove her where you will, I walk along still,
For, like the light, we make no separation :
You may sooner part the billows of the sea,
And put a bar betwixt their fellowships,
Than blot out my remembrance ; sooner shut
Old Time into a den, and stay his motion ;
Wash off the swift hours from his downy wings,
Or steal eternity to stop his glass,
Than shut the sweet idea I have in me.—
Room for an elder brother ! pray, give place, sir.
Mir. H'as studied duel, too ; take heed, he'll heat thee.-
H'as frighted the old justice into a fever :
I hope he'll disinherit him, too, for an ass;
For though he be grave with years, he's a great baby.
Char. Do not you think me mad?

No, certain, sir,
ıothing from you but things excellent.
look upon my clothes, and laugh at me ;
hes.
They have rich linings, sir.
ɔrother—
His are gold and gaudy.
ouch 'em inwardly, they smell of copper.
you love me? I am an heir, sweet lady,
ɔear a poor dependant ;
honour ; I shall love so ever ;
ıbitious? I may be a great man.
land you covet? my father must die.
That was well put in ; I hope he'll take it deeply.
nen are not immortal, as I take it.
for youth and handsomeness?
ıy brother's a handsome gentleman ;
ive me leave to lead the way, lady.
for love, and make that the reward?
shall not love his heaps of gold
loting superstition
you ; the young man, his delights ;
, when he ploughs the angry sea up,
mountain billows falling on him,
ents and all their angers
nto one vowed destruction,
ı greater joy embrace his safety.
ether like two wanton vines,
ouls and loves in one another ;
ogether, and we'll bear one fruit ;
make us smile, and one grief mourn,
ith us, and one hour of death
r eyes, and one grave make us happy.
one hand seal the match : I'm your's for ever.
', stay, stay, stay!
Nay, certainly, 'tis done, sir.
: was a contract.
Only conditional,
d the land, he had my love too :
ın's the heir, and he'll maintain it.—
angry, sir, at what I say ; [*To Eust.*
, 'tis at your own adventure.
outside of a pretty gentleman,
roth, your inside is but barren.
e I only am in love with ;
/ your face is excellent ;
hunting face, to court the wind with ;

Nor they're not words, unless they be well placed too,
Nor your sweet *damn-me's*, nor your hired verses,
Nor telling me of clothes, nor coach and horses,
No, nor your visits each day in new suits,
Nor your black patches you wear variously,
Some cut like stars, some in half-moons, some lozenges,
All which but show you still a younger brother.
Mir. Gramercy, wench, thou hast a noble soul, too.
Ang. Nor your long travels, nor your little knowledge,
Can make me dote upon you. Faith, go study,
And glean some goodness, that you may show manly;
(Your brother, at my suit, I'm sure, will teach you;)
Or only study how to get a wife.
You're cast far behind; 'tis good you should be melancholy,
It shows like a gamester that had lost his money;
And 'tis the fashion to wear your arm in a scarf, sir,
For you have had a shrewd cut o'er the fingers.
Louis. But are you in earnest?
Ang. Yes, believe me, father;
You shall never choose for me; you're old and dim, sir,
And the shadow of the earth eclipsed your judgment:
You've had your time without control, dear father,
And you must give me leave to take mine now, sir.
Bri. This is the last time of asking: will you set your han
Char. This is the last time of answering: I will never.
Bri. Out of my doors!
Char. Most willingly.
Mir. He shall, Jew
Thou of the tribe of Many-asses! coxcomb!
And ne'er trouble thee more till thy chops be cold, fool.
Ang. Must I be gone too?
Louis. I will never know thee.
Ang. Then this man will: what fortune he shall run, fa
Be 't good or bad, I must partake it with him.

Philip Massinger—whom Hallam ranks amor dramatists as only second to Shakespeare—has re but scant justice at the hands of certain modern Lamb and Hazlitt concur in depreciating his r and Coleridge gives him but faint praise, though ing his plays to be "as interesting as novels." reader who peruses Massinger can hardly fail charmed with the force and chaste elegance

ge, happily yet sparingly enriched with choice
al allusions, and none of his contemporaries
so well the art of developing his plot in such a
is to surprise and delight the spectator, while
ig out strict poetical justice to all. His declama-
speeches are very fine models of their kind; and
: of his characters, especially his females, are elabo-
d with great care. Massinger's style and versi-
ion are strongly marked with his own peculiar
ner; yet so little is that manner known, even to
fessed scholars, that in most of the current manuals
d books of "specimens," a scene from "The Virgin
rtyr," undoubtedly written by Decker, is given as
example of his brother poet's composition! Mas-
ger had suffered much from the ignorance of printers
d editors when Gifford gave to the world his un-
valled edition of the text, of which it has been justly
id that a more perfect edition of an old poet than
is never issued from the press. Our poet's life seems
t to have been a happy one, the few biographical
cts that have come down to us, showing that he often
sted the bitter cup of poverty.

The two following extracts from Massinger will give
he student some slight idea of the poet's style. The
rst is from the "Bashful Lover." Alonzo is sent from
he Duke of Tuscany to demand the hand of Matilda,
onzaga's daughter, in marriage:—

Gonzaga. Suppose this granted.
Uberti. Or, if denied, what follows?
Alonzo. Present war,
With all extremities the conqueror can
Inflict upon the vanquish'd.
Uberti. Grant me license
To answer *this defiance.* What intelligence

Holds your proud master with the will of Heaven,
That, ere the uncertain die of war be thrown,
He dares assure himself the victory?
Are his unjust invading arms of fire?
Or those we put on in defence of right
Like chaff to be consumed in the encounter?
I look on your dimensions, and find not
Mine own of lesser size; the blood that fills
My veins as hot as yours; my sword as sharp;
My nerves of equal strength; my heart as good;
And, confident we have the better cause,
Why should we fear the trial!

Farneze. You presume
You are superior in numbers; we
Lay hold upon the surest anchor, virtue;
Which, when the tempest of the war roars loudest,
Must prove a strong protection.

Gonzaga. Two main reasons
(Seconding those you have already heard)
Give us encouragement; the duty that
I owe my mother country and the love
Descending to my daughter. For the first,
Should I betray her liberty, I deserved
To have my name with infamy razed from
The catalogue of good princes; and I should
Unnaturally forget I am a father,
If, like a Tartar, or for fear or profit,
I should consign her, as a bondwoman,
To be disposed of at another's pleasure;
Her own consent or favour never sued for,
And mine by force exacted. No, Alonzo,
She is my only child, my heir; and, if
A father's eyes deceive me not, the hand
Of prodigal nature hath given so much to her
As, in the former ages, kings would rise up
In her defence, and make their cause her quarrel:
Nor can she, if that any spark remain
To kindle a desire to be possess'd
Of such a beauty, in our time, want swords
To guard it safe from violence.

Hortensio. I must speak,
Or I shall burst: now to be silent were
A kind of blasphemy: if such purity,
Such innocence, an abstract of perfection,
The soul of beauty, virtue, in a word,
A temple of things sacred, should groan under
The burden of oppression, we might

the saints, and tax the powers above us
ligence or injustice.—Pardon, sir,
nger's boldness, and in your mercy call it
eal, not rudeness. In a cause like this
sbandman would change his ploughing-irons
apons of defence, and leave the earth
d, although a general dearth should follow :
udent would forswear his book, the lawyer
f his thieving gown, and, without pay,
ude this cause is to be fought, not pleaded.
omen will turn Amazons, as their sex
were wronged ; and boys write down their names
muster-book for soldiers.

llowing is from the "Great Duke of Florence." i being recalled from his tutor's residence to forced to part from Lidia :—

anni. Happy the golden mean ! Had I been born
r sordid cottage, not nursed up
pectation to command a court,
like such of your condition, sweetest,
'en a safe and middle course, and not,
now, against my choice, compelled,
e grovelling on the earth, or raised
upon the pinnacles of state,
must either keep my height with danger,
with certain ruin.
. Your own goodness
your faithful guard.
anni. O Lidia !—
erini. So passionate !
anni. For, had I been your equal,
t have seen and liked with mine own eyes,
ot, as now, 'with others' ; I might still,
ithout observation or envy,
ave done, continued my delights
you, that are alone, in my esteem,
bstract of society : we might walk
itary groves, or in choice gardens ;
the variety of curious flowers
mplate nature's workmanship and wonders :
hen, for change, near to the murmur of
bubbling fountain, I might hear you sing,
from the well-tuned accents of your tongue,
imagination conceive

With what melodious harmony a quire
Of angels sing above their Maker's praises.
And then, with chaste discourse, as we return'd,
Imp feathers to the broken wings of Time:—
And all this I must part from.

Of Ford's life there exist but scant records; t writings show him to have been a dramatist of no mon ability. So far as is known he was concern the production of about sixteen plays, in the position of some of which he was part author Nine of these have been preserved to us, and been published, with annotations, by the en William Gifford. Ford's choice of subjects fo plots is sometimes infelicitous, and there is oft cast of gloom over his scenes, but his comma language is great and his verse generally pleasing harmonious. His best tragedy "'Tis pity sh Whore" is revolting from the character of its but will always delight the dramatic student b merits as a work of art.

The beautiful subject of the following lines Ford's "Lover's Melancholy" has been treated by poets of the time, but by none with equal taste feeling:—

Menaphon. Passing from Italy to Greece, the tales
Which poets of an elder time have feign'd
To glorify their Tempe, bred in me
Desire of visiting that paradise.
To Thessaly I came; and, living private,
Without acquaintance of more sweet companions
Than the old inmates to my love, my thoughts,
I day by day frequented silent groves
And solitary walks. One morning early
This accident encountered me: I heard
The sweetest and most ravishing contention
That art and nature ever were at strife in.
Amethus. I cannot yet conceive what you infer.
By art and nature.

I shall soon resolve you.
music touch'd mine ears, or rather
ny soul: as I stole nearer,
the melody, I saw
this fair-faced youth, upon his lute
is of strange variety and harmony,
g, as it seem'd, so bold a challenge
r choristers of the woods, the birds,
ey flock'd about him, all stood silent,
at what they heard. I wonder'd too.
nd so do I: good! on—
A nightingale,
st skill'd musician, undertakes
nge, and for every several strain
iaped youth could touch, she sang her own;
iot run division with more art
uaking instrument than she,
ngale, did with her various notes
for a voice, and for a sound,
tis much easier to believe
they were than hope to hear again.
low did the rivals part?
You term them rightly;
ere rivals, and their mistress, harmony.
thus spent, the young man grew at last
ty anger, that a bird
had never taught cliffs, moods, or notes,
with him for mastery, whose study
l many hours to perfect practice:
: controversy, in a rapture
nstrument he plays so swiftly,
oluntaries, and so quick,
was curiosity and cunning,
id discord, lines of differing method
one full centre of delight.
low for the bird.
The bird, ordain'd to be
it martyr, strove to imitate
ral sounds; which, when her warbling throat
or grief down dropp'd she on his lute,
her heart! It was the quaintest sadness
conqueror upon her hearse
funeral elegy of tears,
me, my Amethus, I could chide
unmanly weakness, that made me
iourner with him.
I believe thee.

Men. He look'd upon the trophies of his art,
Then sigh'd, then wiped his eyes, then sigh'd and cried,
"Alas! poor creature! I will soon revenge
This cruelty upon the author of it;
Henceforth this lute, guilty of innocent blood,
Shall nevermore betray a harmless peace
To an untimely end:" and in that sorrow,
As he was pashing it against a tree,
I suddenly stepp'd in.

James Shirley, "the last of a great race," to c
Lamb, "all of whom spoke nearly the same lang
and had a set of moral feelings and notions in
mon," was the author of some forty dramatic pr
tions, most of them marked by a deep poetic vein
deficient in character and humour, and some of
bearing marks of carelessness or hasty compositio
full of animation and sprightly dialogue, that still s
the reader's interest. Here are a few lines by w
specimen from his comedy of "The Changes:"

Friend. Master Caperivit, before you read, pray tell n
Have your verses any adjectives?
Caperivit. Adjectives!
Would you have a poem without adjectives?
They are the flower, the grace of all our language.
A well-chosen epithet doth give new soul
To fainting poesy, and makes every verse,
A bride! With adjectives we bait our lines,
When we do fish for gentlewomen's loves,
And with their sweetness catch the nibbling ear
Of amorous ladies; with the music of
These ravishing nouns we charm the silken tribe,
And make the gallant melt with apprehensions
Of the rare word. I will maintain it against
A bundle of grammarians, in poetry
The substantive itself cannot *subsist*
Without its adjective.
Friend. But for all that,
Those words would sound more full, methinks, that are
So larded, and if I might counsel you,
You should compose a sonnet clean without them.
A row of stately substantives would march

ke Switzers, and bear all the fields before them ;
.rry their weight ; show fair, like deeds enroll'd ;
ɔt writs, that are first made and after fill'd.
ıen first came up the title of blank verse ;—
ɔu know, sir, what blank signifies?—when the sense,
rst framed, is tied with adjectives like points,
ıd could not hold together without wedges :
ang it, 'tis pedantic, vulgar poetry.
:t children, when they versify, stick here
ıd there these peddling words for want of matter :
ıets write masculine numbers.

ring the time of these dramatists and that of predecessors there existed at Court a kind of ainment, which was furnished by the chief poets : day, and the utter abandonment of which by arsimonious German monarchs we have great to regret. This was the court masque, a thea- pageant, imitated also by the lawyers and the :s at the inns of court and the universities, which alled the Masque ; of which Milton's "Comus" ıs the most poetical and familiar specimen. There reason why such an entertainment should not : now, and give an impulse to literature and an ɔling and elevating entertainment to all concerned. r. Collier's "Annals of the Stage"—a book writ- ıith a certain exact dryness, but well worthy of ive perusal—we find that this kind of drama in the early days of Elizabeth, and that it chiefly ɜted in a grave and graceful musical and dramatic ıry, in which sometimes deep truths were im- ɛd, and always graceful fancies presented. Many se masques were given in Whitehall, in that ban- ıg room through which Charles I., who often ed part in them, walked to the scaffold, and they l at the death of Charles II.

Chapter XII.

THE BIBLE AND ITS TRANSLA

EAVING for a time the Dram
we have seen, a theological
moral teacher, we now appr
which has given the greatest l
pulse to the world, for he v
rightly understand the nature of the Briti
should by no means forget that two grea
have always governed them, and seem t
them more than any others. These may b
up in two words — Religion and Poli
while endeavouring to be thoroughly well
and justly dealt by in this world, the E
bends his thoughts to the next. Religi
mixes itself with his policy, and policy w
ligion. He has his favourite statesman a
vourite preacher, the one offering him a p
all political evils; the other showing him a
method of salvation. It is but just to sa
though we may well be proud of the State
have conducted English affairs through ma
times, we may be even prouder of the race
gians of all shades of opinion who have fo
directed the thoughts of those who hav

ı, in a manly, free, bold, and yet Christian way, who have followed for the most part John Bunyan's :e, and have "stuck close by the Bible."

ıese Theologians have produced an immense body :erature; of which though few can wholly master et is it incumbent upon all self-improvers to know thing. Indeed it is earnestly to be wished that a :r study of Christian theology were undertaken by oung, who would find the old Church of England Puritan divines, as well as the earlier English rs of the Roman Catholic Church, not only in- tive, but really amusing and absorbing writers, y devoid of the unpleasant mannerisms which : the religious tract and the religious magazine -day often nauseous, and full of true Christian , open, cheerful, and sunshiny in character. · abound in racy, nervous, and characteristic ıg; not lacking in humorous, homely illustra- and free from the conventional solemnity and :ss which some later religious writers have as- d. For neither Lord Macaulay's description of Young Levite," the play-writer's "Parson Subtle," ielding's "Parson Trulliber" can be accepted as ly characteristic of an age, since in that age good ound Christians and Churchmen were to be found enty. The World and the Church, using these s in more senses than one, have been ever at nce. The man of the world paints the hu- us, the characteristic, and the wicked of various :s; and the "Parson" has always afforded an butt to fling those bitter jibes and jeers at, which, h they may cause the thoughtless to laugh, cannot ake the judicious grieve. It is, however, to be *ked that the very painters* of these Aristophanic

characters of the professors of religion give us an
tidote to their poison. As Fielding supplies us
one or two parsons to laugh at, so he takes car
paint one whom all the world may admire; an
Chaucer speaks full freely of the monk, the friar,
the abbot, he does not omit to paint the poor pa
(curate) of a town in such tender words that the w
will not readily forget them :—

> A good man was ther of religioun,
> And was a pore persoun of a toun;
> But riche he was of holy thought and werk;
> He was also a lerned man, a clerk
> That Cristes gospel truly woldé preche;
> His parischens devoutly wold he teche.
> Benigne he was, and wondur diligent,
> And in adversité ful pacient. . . .
> So ferst he wrought and afterward he taught
> Out of the Gospel he the wordés caught . . .
> But Criste's lore and his Apostles twelve
> He taught; and ferst he folwed it himselve.

It will not be necessary for the general stude
read the very early English divines. Neither in m
nor in manner will these writers repay him.
venerable Bede, and the Anglo-Saxon and No
ecclesiastical writers may also be left to those sch
who make special researches in these fields of l
ture. Even the Fathers of the Christian Church
with very few exceptions—and we may say this fi
as they are common property, and neither Rom
nor Protestant—hardly worth reading. They
says a modern Professor of History, and we ca
echo his words, "extravagantly over-rated in the
of the Reformers as divines and authorities in m
of faith; and there is something melancholy in
men as Ridley and Cranmer resting their own
trines on the authority of men so greatly inferi

as the major part of the Fathers." But Ridley
:ranmer did so, because the Church of Rome
ntly protested that the body of Patristic Divinity
her side, whereas it was soon seen that the old
:s condemned the modern innovations of that
h. The real value of the Fathers consists in
evidence as to doctrine taught and the cere-
s observed in their day; and the greatest and
ımong them afford us no authority—except by
:d interpretation—for confession, priestly abso-
, invocation of saints, purgatory, Mariolatry, pic-
images in churches, and all the fond symbolism
has been made dogmatic by the Council of

When, however, the Church of England dared
free, and stand aloof from the Bishop of Rome,
d asserted its freedom in the first article of
ı Charta, but afterwards lapsed into fashionable
ıde,) the appeal to the older authorities did not
ith the Fathers. The English Protestant went
:e to the Bible as the only safe ground; and
:he translation of the Bible and its diffusion by
:wly-invented art of printing may be dated the
rise in literature and expansion of mind.

Rome was not disposed to allow this expansion
ntinue. In 1559 Pope Paul IV. published a
rous edict, ordering that all books of which the
:h authorities disapproved were to be catalogued
"Index Expurgatorius"—a list of works that "the
ıl" were forbidden to read; and in this "Index"
)les printed in foreign tongues were placed. No
han forty-eight editions were condemned, and
)ne printers were put under the ban, all works
by *them being* expressly forbidden. Henry

Stephens, and the illustrious Oporinus "h honour," to use the words of Hallam, to b these. The same historian ("Europe in th Ages") thinks that "Rome struck a fatal b haps more deadly than she intended, at lite the 'Index Expurgatorius'" but this we m for in many cases the prohibition, as has bee out by Bayle, sold the book; and a booksell a good but unsaleable work hastened to get in the "Index" to push it off. But there is left us to doubt that, at the very period of t of learning in Europe, the ecclesiastics waged a deadly war with literature and "Wherever," says Hallam, "the sway of F Spain was felt, *books were unsparingly bu* to this cause is imputed the scarcity of many But it was not alone in Rome that literatur from restrictions. The Queen of England her life was placed under a ban, and that was condemned: hence Popish books were in England, except for the use of the co 1555 the Stationers' Company obtained a r but the tyrannical Star Chamber watched over the exercise of the Company's privil its regulations in 1585 no press was allo used out of London, save at Oxford and C but the influence of reading and of religio had seized upon the English mind, and stream of knowledge broadened and deepe it burst over the petty barriers which, unde tence of directing, endeavoured to confine it

The great agent in giving us not only a fr and Government, but an independent and b

re, and in fixing our language, was the English transtion of the Bible.

Among our first translators following in the footeps of Wycliff, whose version was more than a cenıry earlier, Tyndale claims pre-eminence. He was a ergyman of Gloucestershire, of great piety, gentleess of demeanour, industry, and learning. Begining to translate the Bible, in 1525, when he pubshed the New Testament, he was so persecuted that found it necessary to retire to Germany, where he et with Luther, and his translation was first published Wittenberg. Sir Thomas More, so zealous was he r the Romish faith, called the poor clergyman "a asphemous beast, and a child of hell, and of his own ther the devil that is in hell," and caused him to be ıtrapped at Antwerp; and through the agencies of olsey, More, and Henry VIII., the poor pious man as strangled and burnt for heresy at Vilvoord, near ntwerp, September, 1536, exclaiming, "Lord, open ıe King of England's eyes." Upon Tyndale's version, ost admirable for its accuracy, our present Bible is some degree based. Dr. Geddes praises Tyndale's ınslation for its simplicity, propriety of idiom, and rity of style; in which essentials no English version yet surpassed it.

Our authorised version was produced in the reign of ıes I. as a remedy for the differing versions then in . It was executed with singular care. Forty-seven sons, in six companies, meeting at Westminster, ford, and Cambridge, distributed the labour been them, twenty-five taking the old, fifteen the w Testament, and seven the Apocrypha. "The es," *says Hallam,* "for their guidance were de-

signed to secure the holy words as much
from any novel interpretation. The trans
the Bishops' Bible (1568) was established
After each person had completed his por
it aloud to his fellows, each holding in h
original or some Latin version or transla
comparing every word. By this means
doubt that the translators reached, as nea
work can reach, perfect accuracy. The
excellent, simple, and manly. It has, pe
too enthusiastically praised, as it is held t
fection of the English language; and "
Hallam complains, "is allowed to find fa
In consequence of a rigid adherence to
the English is occasionally older than the
the translation was made; but it is hone
and never wanting either in depth or sir
has been recognised as so true and fair, th
made for the English Church, all sects ha
it, and some with such fervour that if an
to touch a letter of it, or to endeavour t
sentence, he is looked upon as sacrilegi
the crowning merit of direct simplicity,
taken hold of the English and American
cially of those who reside not in towns, bu
off country, that its phrases have become
tongue, and unconsciously its sentences ev
our common conversation. Nor is there
or duty perverted or touched. The Roma
it be possible, refute the Protestant from his
without appealing to the Douay, the Rhe
Latin Vulgate. The Independent, the
Congregationalist, the Baptist, the Moravi

Brother, alike appeal to this Episcopal ver-
ıly the Unitarian, we believe, of all sects—
omanist—have, with the exception of one or
ıtric individuals, gone to the trouble of re-
ş even portions of the sacred books. In
ifferent version of the Old Testament was
at Douay for the use of the English Catholics.
translation of the Bible has contributed to
fix our tongue, so it has intensified and sim-
ɜ English character, and we must remember
ve much of this to our admirable preachers,
e old time did not neglect diligent instruction
truth. Thus in the Homilies of the Church
d, published in 1547, and again in 1563, "by
ɜr most excellent Majesty, for the souls' health
jects," people are told that they "who would
the right and perfect way to God must apply
ls to know the Holy Scripture, without the
:y can neither know what is pleasant to God,
ɜir office and duty; and as drink is pleasant to
be dry, and meat to them that be hungry, so is
g, hearing, searching, and studying the Scrip-
ıem that be desirous to know God or them-
We are also told that, as the great clerk and
ıcher, St. John Chrysostom saith, "Whatever
ry to the salvation of man, is fully contained in
ure of God; therefore, forsaking the corrupt
of fleshly men, which care not but for their
t us reverently hear and read Holy Scripture,
:he food of the soul; let us diligently search
ell of life, which is in the Old and New
ts, and not run for our justification and sal-

vation *to the stinking puddles of men's traditions by men's imaginations.*"

By the same unmistakeable language, settir fiance the traditions of the proud Church of Rc referring to the pure fountain-head of theol preachers of the sixteenth and seventeenth c especially distinguished themselves. While Sir More, who was driven by his opinions to perse Protestants, cast in his great influence on o Hugh Latimer (who suffered martyrdom und at Oxford) fought on the other. He was educ course, in the faith of Rome, but became conv the preaching of Master "Thomas Bilney, o Saint Bilney, that suffered death, for God's word as he affectionately calls him. Cardinal Wolse Latimer and Bilney to be tried; and Bilney, a the terrors of the law, recanted, and saved the But set at liberty, Bilney's conscience revolte again avowed his Protestantism, and was dul alive. Latimer, however, by the unlooked-for k of Henry VIII. was made Bishop of Worceste see he vacated on the passing of six articles in ment, establishing Popery. In Edward VI.'s t was in favour at Court, but never again ser office of bishop; and being, in Queen Mary summoned before the council, would not abj opinions, but went cheerfully to death. "Thi has long groaned for me," he exclaimed, when h to the stake (1555); and his noble adjuration fellow-martyr was, "Be of good cheer, brother and play the man! for we shall this day light candle in England as by God's grace shall n put out."

Latimer and Cranmer are noticeable in English literature as having improved the style of preaching. The monks and preachers in England and in Germany before the Reformation, had degenerated in style; they told ridiculous stories of saints, repeated incidents often trivial or immoral, which they dwelt upon with unction; and the sermon, which was really a discourse (*sermo*), not a reading (*lectio*), from a written paper,—was too often a farrago of nonsense. Cranmer discountenanced the tales of false miracles of which the pulpit addresses of his day were largely made up. He and Latimer instructed preachers to enlarge upon Bible texts; they themselves explained the Word of God, and led their hearers to understand the sacred writings. Latimer's sermons are by no means like the polished discourses of a later age. They are full of anecdote, jests, puns even; but in them lies the essence of all true religion, earnest piety, and deep humility.

It may not be out of place here to refer to a celebrated work which, having circulated throughout the length and breadth of the land, has not been without its share in forming the opinions of the people—Foxe's "Acts and Monuments of these latter and perillous dayes, touching matters of the Church," &c. (1562-3) —commonly called the "Book of Martyrs," a work on which the author laboured for eleven years, and in which he has put, says Burnet, no "errors nor prevarications, but the utmost fidelity and exactness." More dreadful stories than many that he relates it would be impossible to find; and these stories are told with a simplicity that carries conviction of the truth with it. Sometimes Foxe, it is said, "loses his temper, and sullies his pages with coarse language;" but the wonder is that, feel-

ing as he did, and being so near to the times of th
tyrdoms, he did not burst out into continual in
tions on the stupid and cruel wrong-doers, whc
tying maidens and young men to the stake, ofter
and reviled them. It will be well to study this l
it be only to realise the intense hatred that relig
tolerance can produce, and the cruelties that
birth to. Let it be remembered, too, that Ro
are not solely blameable on this score; barbarit
shameful kind were, in England and elsewhere,
on them in return by those of the Reforme
Another writer with whom acquaintance shc
made is Richard Hooker (1553-1600), the autl
treatise "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity
fence of the Church of England against Purit
others, conducted with so much temper, sw
piety, sagacity, and such an amount of learni
it has universally obtained for its author the *so*
of "the judicious Hooker." This work was t
of a lifetime almost entirely dedicated to it.
never, my lord," he wrote to his archbishop, "
to finish what I have begun, unless I be rem
some quiet parsonage, where I may see God's l
spring out of mother earth, and eat my own
peace and quietness, meditating my approachi
tality, and that account all flesh must give a
God." In such a parsonage, presented by
Elizabeth, the good man finished his work,
three books of which were not printed till
death. A few days before this event, his ho
robbed. "Are my papers safe?" inquired th
author. "Yes," was the reply. "Then it matt
he said, "for no other loss can trouble me."

that, when the divines of the Church were men
ituted, their sermons were full of life and in-
or that their writings have taken an honour-
ce in the literature of their country.

Chapter XIII.

THEOLOGIANS.

(Continued.)

SERMONS are now considered dull things When a person relates how a scolding has been given him, or a reproof administered, he says, "Mr. —— preache me a regular sermon." This should n be. Sermons are discourses upon the most interestir and life-like topics. They concern us here and he after. The preacher has the finest themes in t world; if therefore he send his hearers to sleep, or f to awaken a lively attention, he is manifestly an un man, and should cease from preaching. For peo like sermons: they will listen to them eagerly, and re them attentively when they are good. When they a bad, like sweetness turned to vinegar, they are bitte so. And truly no other workman than the parson save the king—is allowed to supply his customers w such bad work. When the novelist is bad, the politi writer silly, or the essayist dull, the people refuse th adhesion, and will not read; but the parson, master *the situation*, can afford to inflict upon his hearers '

easoning, the most inefficient delivery, the most
d deterrent theology.

as a whole, we have a body of sermons in our
literature such as no other nation in the world
es. "Sermons have been more frequently pub-
n England," says Hallam, "than in any other
;" indeed, we have only to look at the flood
ourses by dissenting ministers, and Church of
d divines, which are annually poured from the
o be assured of the truth of this assertion. Of
only a few of the elder divines can be here
, and those must be of paramount excellence;
1 is the superabundance of this kind of literature
: can afford to be eclectic; indeed, a good
may well be ignorant of a great deal of it. Yet,
time, these preachers served God and did well;
loquent words fell into many willing ears, and
l and sustained many pilgrims on their way to
. Many an eloquent tongue which sang the
of God in lonely villages, and told of His mer-
simple country folk and shepherds, in plains
rom the busy haunts of men, will be heard in
eat Day, in the universal jubilant chorus of re-
l ones standing in awe-full splendour around the
White Throne. It may be added, that in the
ody of English divinity, such have been the
g and industry of the chief writers on the sub-
would be difficult to name an error that has
en refuted, a question that has not been an-
, a wound of conscience that has not been
and healed, a sin that has not been condemned
ly, honestly, and with the true ability of the
an champion.

At the head of our English divines sta
Taylor (born in 1613) at least as regard
and brilliancy of imagination. He has b
called the Spenser, by others the Shakesp
theological literature; and he deserves
He is as learned, as sweet, and as alluring
and he has sometimes the tragic force and
and then a glimpse of the humour, and in
the fertile imagery and copiousness of
Shakespeare. He came of a good stock, b
descendant of Doctor Rowland Taylor, w
for the faith in the time of the persecu
Mary. Jeremy's father, who had fallen,
persecution of his family, "into the porti
and outworn faces," as his son says, was
Cambridge, and his son was put as a sizar
where in 1631 he took his degree of Bach
and removed to London to deliver some l
college friend in St. Paul's Cathedral. "
storm which dashed the vessel of the Cl
pieces," as Taylor expresses it, he clung t
party, served in the royal army as chapla
taken prisoner. He was left a widower
after marriage, with three sons, not one o
vived him. Having taught in a school du
feat of the King's cause, he was made Bish
and Connor after the restoration of Charl
bably, says Heber, to remove him from co
lieve the king from the reproofs of the d
"Ductor Dubitantium, or the Rule of C
his "Holy Living and Holy Dying," and
Exemplar of the Life and Death of Jesus
among his chief works, the second being y

best manual of devotion and admonition ever composed by a single hand. His laborious and useful life closed at Lisburn, in Ireland, in 1667, one year after the great fire. Such was the life—a sweet, noble, and brave one—of our great divine. It is very pleasant to contemplate; there is nothing about it that we would have left undone. Jeremy Taylor's life shows us almost an ideal picture of a Christian bishop, or shepherd, with—to quote Hallam—"an imagination essentially poetical, a warm tone of piety, sweetness, and charity; an accumulation of circumstantial accessories whenever he reasons, or persuades, or describes; an erudition pouring itself forth in quotation, till his sermons become in some places almost a garland of flowers from other writers, and especially those from classical antiquity, never before so redundantly scattered from the pulpit," Taylor is equally distinguished from his contemporaries and his successors. Three or four of his great sermons ought especially to be read—the "Marriage Ring," the "Foolish Exchange," the "House of Feasting," and the "Apples of Sodom:" these will give the reader some notion of his copious imagery, great eloquence, and marvellous sweetness. His fine diction has indeed something of the flow and harmony of verse. But the faults of this eminent man must not be wholly put out of sight. He is too florid, and is carried away by an eastern imagery—partly drawn from the Bible—which the plain English brain does not clearly comprehend. His sentences are long and involved; his learning is sometimes ill-placed, not illustrating his subject; his language loses force by repetitions and pleonasms, and his proofs—and this is his greatest fault, *and the great* fault of almost all eloquent

preachers—his proofs are unsatisfactory, often nugatory, whereas they should never be put forward without being crushing, and utterly insurmountable. Still, Jeremy Taylor is the great sermon-writer of England; and, to quote Hallam, "we have no reason to believe, or rather much reason to disbelieve, that he had any competitor in any other language." Perhaps Hallam forgot "golden-tongued" Chrysostom, the rival in preaching to "silver-tongued" Taylor.[1]

While St. Francis de Sales, who was titular bishop of Geneva, and published (1616) a treatise on the love of God, was leading the Roman Church to a mystic and ascetic spirit, in which, let us add, he mingled a charity and gentleness too often wanting in works of its kind; while St. Teresa, in Spain, some time after, put forth various works full of a mystic theopathy or sympathy with the divine nature; while, yet later, Madame Guyon and Father Michael Molinos lapsed into a mystic Quietism, which was indeed a Romish Quakerism—the divines of England distinguished themselves by a practical method of religious thought eminently suited to the character of the nation. Dr. Donne, whose life has been so sweetly written by Izaak Walton, published a volume of sermons, full of subtlety and strained learning, but from which, in spite of this, many beauties can be taken. Donne is a controversialist, very learned; and he entered warmly into the controversy with Rome. All persons in those days, full of bitter recollections of persecutions on one side, and sufferings and heart-burnings on the other, entered into religious disputation. Grave Sir Henry

[1] The late Bishop Heber's edition of Taylor's works is recommended to the student as being the most complete and correct.

'otton, Minister to Her Majesty at Venice, was ritted as to his English Church, and gave good anvers. "Pray, sir," sneered a Papist, "where was our Church before the Reformation?"—"I will tell ee by a like question, friend," said the knight; Where was your face this morning before it was ashed?" But still being questioned, he spoke out oldly: "Sir," said he, "my Church was where yours ever was—in the written word of God." It would be ifficult to surpass these two answers for wise wittiness; nd it is well to remember that they were made by one ho was provost of Eton College.

Dr. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, is another ivine, who, without the eloquence of Taylor, yet by is pious and devotional temper, frequently reminds us f him. Hall is more argumentative, and keeps more learly to his subject than Bishop Taylor, and, from the loseness and sententiousness of his style, has been alled "the English Seneca." His writings have fallen nto neglect in our day—undeservedly so. When they vere more generally read, his "Occasional Meditations" was very popular. In this collection of short essays he writer follows out a line of thought upon various ubjects. Thus, he meditates "upon the sight of a ree full-blossomed," "upon hearing music by night," "upon the sight of a great library;" and these meditations are full of suggestive thought and matter; often, indeed, in a page or in half a page, Hall puts more true reflection and feeling than some modern writers do in a volume. One of the common methods of instruction in the seventeenth century was by small essays on characters, in which Hall likewise distinguished himself. He describes the merchant, the hypocrite, the busy-

body, the vain-glorious man, and others, wittily, and well. His delineations of character are short, pithy sentences; as, when he says of th body, "His tongue, like the tail of Samson's carries firebrands, and is enough to set the who of the world in a flame;" and "so, then, he l without thanks, talks without credit, lives witho dies without tears, without pity—save, that so "it was pity he died no sooner." Again, the hy is "an angel abroad, a devil at home; *and wor an angel than when a devil.*" This kind of which will always, in some form or other, be p is now absorbed in the introductory portions o and romances; and many of the best authors present day have shown that the acute spirit o vation which distinguished their predecessors wanting in them. But it is doubtful whether th bethan character-writers, divines and statesmen were—Hall, Bishop of Norwich, John Earle, Bi Worcester, Sir Thomas Overbury, and others been surpassed. The name of the last is well in English history from his mysterious murder was probably instigated by Robert Carr, the fa of James I., and the infamous Countess of Esse name of Peter Heylin (1600-1662), must not be o a geographer, a divine, a poet, and a miscel writer, whose "Micrososmus, or a Little Des of the Great World," was published in 1621. also penned descriptions of the French, the Engl Hollanders, and other nations, which, for th part are as true now as they were when first wr

The learned Usher (1581-1656), Archbis *Armagh* and Primate of Ireland, is not distin

so much by his theological writings, as by his great chronological work, "*Annales*, or Annals of the World's History, from the Creation of the World to the Dispersion of the Jews." The other writings of this learned man are controversial, and he endeavoured, very frequently with success, to convert Roman Catholics to his way of thinking by learned oral disputation. He regarded the Romanist faith as "heretical and apostatical," and went even so far as to declare that "to give them toleration, or to consent that they may freely exercise their religion and profess their faith and doctrine is a grievous sin."

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661) was one of the most remarkable men of his time. As a preacher he acquired immense popularity; and his printed works contain a vast amount of learning and sound sense—not always couched in the most regular and logical style; but mingled with a strain of lively humour which irresistibly attracts the reader. His principal works are, "The Church History of Britain," "The History of the Holy War," and "The Worthies of England." Archbishop Trench has properly pointed out that the modern edition of Fuller's "Church History," by Mr. Nichols, is quite useless to the student of our language, the editor having imagined that it came within his province to exchange the author's quaint old words for modern equivalents.

We must not be surprised if, in that age, many of our best and most learned men gave themselves up to controversy. Among those most worthy to be studied by such as take an interest in religious discussions, is William Chillingworth, born at Oxford, in 1602, who, from his *love of disputation*, was perverted to the

Romish faith by Fisher, the Jesuit. But in the furthe course of his studies, he returned to his old faith— after careful and acute study at the Jesuits' college a Douay—and in 1638 published his famous work, "Th Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation." H opponents have attempted to decry this exceller production; but they have never been able to refu it. He always appeals to reason, is opposed to for in religious disputes, and is so wide, open, and free his discussions, that he has been called an Arian and Socinian. The work was itself an answer to a treati by a Jesuit of the name of Knott, who wrote a boc to prove that Protestants, not repenting of their fait could not be saved. Chillingworth answers every par graph, and almost every sentence. His chief excellenc in replying to Knott (who, says Hallam, is by no mean a despicable writer), is, that he combats Romish asse tions with "a close reasoning, which avoids every dan gerous admission, and yields to no ambiguousness o language." He has also a strength of intellect and sin cerity of feeling which cannot fail to impress the reade Very learned, thoroughly versed in the Fathers—a learned and as subtle a schoolman as Laud—he ye declares the Bible, and that *alone*, to be the exclusiv source of religion, and cares little for "the learne fathers who are set against fathers, and councils whic are set against councils. "This deifying our own in terpretations and tyrannously forcing them on others, he says, "this presumptuous imposing of *the special sens of men on the general words of God*, is the common in cendiary of Christendom, and tears in pieces, not th coat, but the bowels and members of Christ. Tak away this persecuting, burning, cursing, and damnin

of men for not subscribing to the words of men as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but Him only; let those leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it, and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it in their actions. In a word, take away Tyranny."

Thus Chillingworth, John Hales (1584-1656), and others with us, and abroad the learned Grotius and Calixtus, tried to bring about a more universal communion, to widen the borders of Christianity, not to narrow its field. In Scotland the same width of opinion did not prevail, but there was more burning zeal against and hatred of the Romish faith; and the preachings of John Knox (1505-1572), originally bred a friar, but a most ardent opposer of the old faith, and one of whom the Earl of Morton said, "he feared God, but never feared the face of man," gave rise to earnest religious inquiry and a zeal towards the faith that has probably never been surpassed in any country. That these controversial preachers often overstepped Christian charity, gentleness, and calmness, there is no doubt, but that they promoted an earnest study of the Bible, and raised God's word from a dead letter to a living spirit, is undeniable.

But, after all, controversy is dry reading, and to be learned in disputation is not required of all men. In religious writings, in those of Barrow, South, Baxter, Howe, Bunyan, and many others, in the Puritan divines as well as in the pages of those of the Anglican Church, there is much sweet comfort, wise counsel, and enduring consolation with which the student may from time to time refresh himself.

Chapter XIV.

LETTERS AND LETTER-WRITING.

"NOTHING," said Horace Walpole, "gives so just an idea of an age as genuine letters; nay, history waits for its last seal for them." Strictly speaking, all history began in letters, and for their sake the art of writing was itself invented; for letters are but the representatives and proxies of a man, which can be sent through the post, and talk with distant friends, applaud generous actions, be censorious on the wicked and foolish; and truly they give to man a sort of ubiquity. He, then, who does not know how to write a letter well has studied literature to little purpose, for with him the power of expression is but half-developed. It will be well, before we go into the vast field of epistolatory literature, to give a few hints to those who wish to study the subject.

Those who wish to write a good letter should dismiss from their minds the absurd but witty French epigram, that words were given to men to *conceal* their thoughts. God gave us language to express our thoughts, and all should do so plainly, directly, and

words as possible. Johnson said that in his
s and journals were generally written in a
; but the praise, too sweeping by far, is not
a century later.

st rule to be observed is to have something
d to say it; to write straight off, without
out or periphrasis; to employ as few words
; and having said it, to conclude. If the
pleasant, it will be best thus communicated;
npleasant, that method, too, will be best.
ution is not only stupid, but dangerous, for
this motto is to be borne in mind, *Litera*
net—the written letter survives, and may be
vidence *against* you. Don't, therefore, out
ss, say more than you intend. Use set forms
set occasions, and having placed the gist or
he letter in its fit place, the middle, conclude.
of the times is unnecessary talk, clatter, and
Men sit down to write letters or leading
: is all one to them—without having anything
to say. Hence the readers go away dissatis-
ask for literary bread, and have stones given

cond rule is, always to guard your pen in
; and, where possible, to convey a kindly
recur to a proverb: *Litera scripta nocet*—the
ter rankles and hurts. People may apply a
ent weight to your words from that which
yourself. They may think more of you than
youself; or your style may be strange and
m, and affect them more. Besides this, you
hand to explain your words; and many men
rverse way of looking at matters. Hence,

great plainness and precision are necessary, ; only to be got in few words. When lawye entangle one, they overlay their leases or de multiplicity of words; whereas all great men to be understood, use few. Moreover, y spondent may have but little time. "If," great Wellington—a model letter-writer,— will have no mercy upon each other, I entre have mercy upon me." He lays down a r if observed, will save many young officers, a men, too, from getting into trouble. A little and practice, he says, "will enable people together a few words for a letter;" but this *a most dangerous* qualification to the possess he has sense to guide his pen, and discret strain him in the use of improper and intem guage."

The third rule is to answer all letters pleasing. If they are unpleasant, wait, rea read; then write, and lay by the answer tc after an interval of some hours, before postin

The fourth rule applies to reading letter always to construe them as good-naturedly a Paper wars, wherein letters pass and re-pass monly useless and unpleasant. In the public where such letters sometimes get inserted constantly editors suggesting that the corres must cease. Last words beget last words; expression begets another more angry, and by it embroiled in enmity for ever. Literar great sinners in this way. From practice the a certain facility of expression and a metho *hitting*, which is distressing to their oppon *hurtful* to themselves.

And now as to the literature of letters. English literature abounds in good models of all styles; and in Latin and French we have others, hardly, indeed, to be surpassed, but certainly equalled by a few of our own writers. The letters of Cicero and Pliny are easy, witty, discursive, and so well written, that they please even after having survived nearly two thousand years. They narrate some common, others extraordinary circumstances, and in either case will admirably illustrate the rules just laid down. They commence affectionately and simply, and go at once to the root of the matter; and, after having delivered their message or narration, end. The letter of Pliny the Younger, relating to the destruction of Pompeii by the eruption of Vesuvius, is a model of simple narration. It, with others, is to be met with in the third volume of "Knox's Elegant Extracts"—a sound collection, the careful reading of which will make the reader master, not only of style, but of many important things. Of all letter-writers, however, the great Erasmus claims the first place. His letters have all the charm of conversation; and that is the truest test of a good letter. If he describes a curious foreign usage, you see it performed before you. "You are acquainted with it in a moment," says Charles Lamb; "you perceive that you have been in the habit of seeing it ever since you were born. He introduces you to his friends; you shake hands at once, and are on the most intimate terms in a moment."

"The Paston Letters," a cheap edition of which is to be met with in "Bohn's Library," (a cheap collection of books which has been made with great taste and knowledge, and which has laid all self-educators and

the public under a debt of gratitude to the projector and editors,) were written by the Paston family during the wars of York and Lancaster, and concern a variety of familiar subjects, from begging for a place at Court, or narrating the sad fortunes of Henry VI. and his queen, to the letter of an Eton schoolboy, and thanks for the present of a box of figs. Horace Walpole, himself a model of a gossiping letter-writer, says of them, "The letters of Henry VI.'s time have come out, and to me make all other letters not worth reading." This praise is too high; nevertheless, the letters give a curious insight into the English character during Henry's reign, and let a light into history not elsewhere to be obtained. The authenticity of the "Paston Letters" has been ably, but quite unsuccessfully disputed—indeed, they bear on their face evidence of their genuine character. Next comes a celebrated book, the series of letters to and from James Howell, called, "Familiar Letters, Domestic and Foreign, partly Historical, Political, and Philosophical." Howell's Latin motto signifies "As keys open locks, so letters open the breast of man." The book contains lively narratives of matters during the reign of James I., Charles I., and Cromwell's Protectorate; letters to Ben Jonson and other poets; a narrative of the assassination of Buckingham; and curious matters concerning the manufacture of glass, to learn which Howell travelled to Venice. Howell is always cheerful and discursive, and his letters were so popular that they went through eleven editions in a century. But the thoughts are not those of a strong mind, the value of the book would have been much greater. Of the "Letters of Oliver Cromwell," published and eluci-

Thomas Carlyle, we can only say that they read before we can judge the times or the

ters of Cowley, a poet and an essayist of no ler, follow close upon these. Cowley, who cipher writer to Charles I. and II., was diplo- employed, saw many towns and peoples, and d with him into the active life of a courtier tive and cultivated mind of a scholar. His erefore are full of matter charmingly put, he whole of his courtier-life he appears to ged for retirement in the country; but alas! ely he found retirement, he died at an early igh overheating himself by working amidst labourers. After these letters, another cele- llection, possessing a mournful interest, may d. They are those of Lady Rachel Russell, d as amanuensis for her husband (Lord Wil- ring his trial, and who after his judicial ived for many years to revere his memory, to on religion, and to correspond with those a and pious friends who honoured her bravery tion.

lifferent from these last, written from a dif- nd-point, clever, brilliant, and, as regards him- icial, are the letters of Pope and the brilliant friends who surrounded him. During the which he lived the letters of eminent per- become so interesting and popular, that any d name—even if it were a forgery—sufficed volume. The two great publishers were Curll ot; and Curll, surreptitiously it was supposed, *copies of Pope's* letters, and published them

while he was living. Sometimes, indeed, l
issued a volume, he waited till the writer wa
and thus, as Dr. Arbuthnot wittily said, "adc
terror to death." But Pope has himself bee
of selling by an agent his own letters to Curll
they were carefully prepared for publication
epigrammatic, witty, reflective, wise, or mer
occasion demands. They are excellent in
but too artificial. The correspondence of P
a mere boy, with old Wycherley, the playwrigh
about town, whose verses he improved and
up," shew how great a master he was at a
age. The letters to Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot,
Craggs, and others, shew how truly friendly
of men of letters was, and prove how good
not only John Gay (whom all loved) was,
how fine in character were Addison and
curious and most charming collection by Swi
to be read, because it places the character o
great man in a true light. When this "
thatched hut," this most powerful man in E
the cassock of a curate, was in London, v
and advising the Ministry, he was also in c
ence with a young lady, whom he tenderly l
his "little letters," as he called them, to St
his hopes and fears, his doings and saying
and his hate, during his stay in London.
opens all his heart; and in these letters w
how tender that heart was.

Two other letter-writers, perfect adepts,
to be passed over; and they both belong to t
or about it—they are Lady Mary Wortley M
manly woman, and Horace Walpole, after

rford, a sort of womanly man. It is hard to say hich is the better letter-writer. We believe that ady Mary is. Certainly Walpole is the more gossip- g, scandalous, light, and ill-natured; and certainly lso Lady Mary, while possessing the weightier and ore sensible style, retails matter of more permanent alue. She went with her husband to Constantinople, hither he was sent as ambassador, and her letters escribe the Turks as they were one hundred and fifty ears ago with a liveliness and vigour that have seldom een equalled, and have never been surpassed. Wal- ole's letters, on the other hand, together with his 'Reminiscences," consisting of letters addressed to is nieces, and his letters to Sir Horace Mann, relate o the Court, courtly people, and to the celebrities in tatesmanship, literature, and art, of his time. They re written on a French model, are full of sharp epi- grammatic sayings, and retail anecdote and scandal in profusion. They give us a picture of life and a pic- ure of the Court from the point of view which an old an of the world, with a not very strong head, and a ot very warm heart, would take; but they are so ively, and written in so easy a manner, that we hardly ver tire of reading them.

Another book, which passes under the name of let- ers, belonging to this time, may here be noticed. It s well worth reading, because of its worldly wisdom— 'Chesterfield's Letters to his Son." These are essays, n the epistolary form, on men, manners, and things— n the way of life of a man of fashion and the world. The advice is given in a direct style, and is sometimes very wise and judicious, although it is based upon the selfish *principle of going* through life easily, and c

making the best of this world. Johnson, to whom the character of Lord Chesterfield was repugnant, said that they taught the "manners of a dancing-master, and the morals of a whore;" still there are many very valuable hints to be found in them. Indeed, had the advice been given from a higher principle, it would have been all that could be wished. In reading his sophistical maxims, it is curious to find an old man of the world selfishly instructing his son to put in practice for his own ease the very duties which Christianity teaches us to undertake for the good of others.

There are many other celebrated collections of letters which may be read with advantage as an addition to history, to morals, or to biography. The letters of the Stuart family regard the history of the Young Pretender, those of the Duke of Marlborough illustrate times of that brilliant general and bad man; the letters and orders, or despatches, of General Washington and those of Benjamin Franklin, treat of the causes of the revolution in the American colonies, and of the formation of that Republic, the rapid history of which is still growing. The letters of Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington show what those two great men were; while letters of Burns, Byron, Moore, and the correspondence of statesmen and artists, reveal to us the inner life of their writers, who are scarcely to be estimated without some such guides. Indeed, we may conclude, with Lord Bacon, when speaking of letters that "such as are written from wise men are of all the words of men (somewhat) the best: they are more natural than orations or public speeches, and more advised than conferences or private ones." Lastly, *and especially* as regards the historical value of let-

s, we cannot urge more weighty words than his: etters of affairs from such as manage them, or are vy to them, are, of all others, the best instructions history, and to a diligent reader the best histories mselves." This remark we may adopt, even though wrench it from the restricted application to State ers and the official letters of statesmen which its at author gave it.

Chapter XV.

THE SATIRISTS.

WHATEVER may be urged in favour of the corruption of human nature, there is in every man not wholly depraved an ever present hatred of vice and contempt of folly; there is moreover a love of virtue and an admiration of that which is noble and pure. These two parallel feelings—which exist even in the breasts of those who often fail to act according to their impulses—produce in poetry what is called satire. This is considered by some a wicked species of composition but, if fitly exercised, it has goodness for its end, and is a salutary check upon sin and folly.

Looked at thus, satirical literature is not only an important, but an improving study. In addition to this, it has another aspect, which makes it interesting to him who would educate himself, and learn the manners of his fellow men. In picturing the vices of mankind; in pointing out the meannesses, the weaknesses and the follies of the age, which the satirist is required to do, he is also obliged to picture the customs, actions and modes of thought of those whom he censures

atirist is a self-elected *Censor morum:* he tries
w where men are wrong, and also to lead them
ight path. He proves that vice is folly, that
i detestable, and in every way unprofitable; and
)lauds in such a way that his shout of triumph is
ore than the hiss of scorn. Let us take, for in-
, one of the deepest and noblest of satirical
nations, uttered by Elijah, in bitter mockery, to
iests who refused to worship the Almighty, but
their knees to Baal; "Cry aloud: for he is a
either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he
a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and
be awaked." Here we at once see what the
t means; and no picture of the hideous wooden
with fiery eyes, and horns, and multitudinous
, could so thoroughly present to us the utter
ssness of the god, or the ridiculous zeal of
olish priests, who cut themselves in their in-
arnestness, and yelled out, "O Baal, hear us!"
instance, too, will serve to picture the general
ıess of the satirist, who wages a war of one man
t a multitude, for Elijah expressly states that
prophets were four hundred and fifty men, and
ren I only, remain a prophet of the Lord."
: origin of the word "satire" is debated. When
recian shepherds met together after their harvest
ıgs they had a kind of rude improvised dialogue,
ch humorous abuse was levelled at different sides;
ıis was called *satyra*, from the satyr, a well-known
)logical demigod, half goat and half man. But
bon, as Dryden notes in his introduction to the
ıtion of *Juvenal*, derives it from *satura*, a dish
with various messes, a variety: hence *per saturam*,

in the gross, without order, confusedly; and *satira*, a satire, a species of composition different from the Greek satyra; "*Sunt quibus in* satirâ *videor nimis acer*" ("there are those to whom my satire seems too sharp"), says Horace (Satires, ii. 1. 1). But, whatever the origin, satiric writing soon had its meaning. It became a powerful engine in the hands of powerful men; and whenever the times have grown luxurious, foolish, and corrupt, there have never been wanting men ready and able to expose the prevailing folly and vice. Satire has, however, this fault—it injures its professor. It is a hiltless sword that cuts the hand of him who uses it. Swift, our greatest example in this way, or at least strongest, if not greatest, wrote thus to Sir Charles Wogan, and we quote the sentence to illustrate our point: "The conjecture," says Swift, "that he has dealt in satire both in prose and in verse *has been an absolute bar to his rising in the world;* ye that very world must suppose that he followed what he thought to be his talent, and that charitable people will suppose that he had a design to laugh the follies of mankind out of countenance, *and as often to last* the vices out of practice."

A clever book upon satire and satirists in general is that by Mr. James Hannay, in which the student will find the results of study and wide reading pleasantly and learnedly set forth, and with much critical acumen. It will not, however, be sufficient to follow Mr. Hannay, nor for our English self-improver to glance only at Horace and Juvenal, Erasmus—a very important man, worthy of careful study—Sir David Lindsay, and George Buchanan. Never did scholarly satire do more service than that of Erasmus.—It was indeed

or the Protestant cause, that the learning, and
istic wit of Erasmus were enlisted on the side of
Luther. Rome could not stand the sharp say-
the wit. Dulness was ashamed; and wealthy
nce was abashed by

> The flash of that satiric rage,
> Which, bursting on the early stage,
> Branded the vices of the age,
> And broke the power of Rome.

before the Dutch produced Erasmus, we had in
er, in John Skelton, and Thomas Tusser, varied
old satirists, who did good service against the
and vices of the priests. Chaucer is full of this
indignation. His Pardoner, his Monk, his
his Sompnour, Abbess, and Prioress, all people
Church, are excellent portraits, drawn from the
it touched in with a scathing satire. The Prioress
rt and a prude, and, although sworn to religion,
a lady as any of our own times. She feeds her
on rosted flesche and milke and wastel brede;"
do not hear that she feeds the poor. She clips
ords as fine ladies do now, and interlards her
n with bits of French, like some modern lady
s, "after the scole of Stratford attë Bowe, for
h of Paris was to her unknowe." She sings
s "entunëd in her nose full swetëly;" but with
ads she wears a brooch,

> On which was fresh y written a crouned A,
> And after, "Amor vincit omnia."

can tell what the Prioress is at once by such
touches as these. The Monk is an outrider,
oved *venerie*—that is, a bold huntsman, who
not a pulled hen for the text that says that

huntsmen be no holy men, or that a reckless monk is like a fish out of water—

> That is to say, a monk out of his cloistre,
> This ilkë text held he not worth an oistre.

His sleeves are lined with fur; his hood is fastened with a curious gold pin, the head of which is a love knot. Thus the poet lets us see what the religious professors of his day were. After them follow others that are described in terms somewhat coarser, but probably not less true; and Chaucer does all this so admirably, that he must be acknowledged as a master of satire. John Skelton, who was Poet Laureate at Oxford, and Royal Orator, and also *laureatus* at Cambridge in Henry VIII.'s time, was a satirist of no mean order. He was curate of Trumpington, near Cambridge, and rector of Diss, in Norfolk, the diocese of which Southey, of that infamous persecuting Bishop Nix who might have considered him, in his own atrocious language, "fit for the frying-pan." No man ever displayed greater courage than Skelton in his attacks on the vices of the age. He attacked Wolsey, in the plenitude of his power, and spoke of his "great genealogy." I have already, at p. 51, given a slight sketch of Skelton's character, and a quotation from his "Philip Sparrow;" but his chief satirical poem is called "The Boke of Colyn Clout, compiled by Master Skelton, Poet Laureate," in which he attacks the clergy with immense vigour, and lashes the vices of the times with a free hand. It must have required some courage in those days of hanging and burning to write like this:—

> Thus I, Colin Clout,
> As I go about,

And wandyring as I walke,
I hear the people talke.
The temporality say plain,
How bishoppes disdain
Sermons for to make,
Or such labour to take;
And how, when ye geve orders
In your provincial borders,
As insipientes,
Some are insufficientes,
Some parum sapientes,
Some nihil intelligentes,
Some valde negligentes,
Some nullum sensum habentes,
But bestially and untaught;
But whan they have once caught
Dominus vobiscum by the hed,
Then renne they in evrie steade,
God wot, with drunken nolles—
Yet tak they cure of soules!
And wotteth never what they rede,
Pater noster nor crede;
Construe not worth a whistle
Neither Gospel nor Pistle;
Theyr matins badly sayde,
Nothing devoutly praide.
Theyr lerning is so small,
Theyr "prymes" and "hours" fal
And leap out o' their lippes
Lyke sawdust or drie chyppes.
I speak not now of al,
But the most part in general
Of suche vagabundus
Speaketh totus mundus.

tudent will see by this how priests' language was up in Henry the Eighth's time with a mixture of atin, and how certain words have thus crept into nglish tongue. In the satires of Skelton there is ant evidence of this. Thomas Sackville, Lord urst, and Earl of Dorset, wrote a satirical poem : follies of the world, called "The Complaint of r Duke of Buckingham," an extract from which e *found at page 58*; and John Donne, a con-

temporary of Shakespeare, and afterwards the celebrated divine, whose life has been so beautifully written by Izaak Walton, wrote some excellent satires. But before him Mr. Hannay rightly classes Bishop Hall, "as the great opener of our formal and classic satire, *i. e.*, the special satirical poem in the heroic metre." As Hall's satires have been almost eclipsed by his later writings as a divine, a specimen of his poetic powers will probably be found interesting. Warton truly says, "The figure of a famished gallant, or beau, in this satire is much better drawn than any of the old comedies." I extract these lines from Mr. Singer's admirable edition of Hall,—

"See'st thou how gaily my young master goes,
Vaunting himself upon his rising toes;
And pranks his head upon his dagger's side;
And picks his glutted teeth since late noontide?
'Tis Ruffio; trow'st thou where he din'd to-day?
In sooth I saw him sit with Duke Humfray.[1]
Many good welcomes and much gratis cheer,
Keeps he for every straggling cavalier.
An open house, haunted with great resort;
Long service mix'd with musical disport.
Many fair yonker with a feather'd crest,
Chooses much rather be his shot-free guest,
To fare so freely with so little cost,
Than stake his twelvepence to a meaner host.
Hadst thou not told me, I should surely say,
He touch'd no meat of all this livelong day.
For sure methought, yet that was but a guess,
His eyes seem sunk for very hollowness.
But could he have (as I did it mistake)
So little in his purse, so much upon his back?
So nothing in his maw? Yet seemeth by his belt
That his gaunt gut no too much stuffing felt.
See'st thou how side [loose] it hangs beneath his hip?
Hunger and heavy iron makes girdles slip.

[1] To dine with Duke Humphrey was to *fast*. The allusi to a tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral—a common resort of th *and needy* in that age.

or all that how stiffly struts he by,
app'd in the new found bravery.
uns of new-won Cales his bonnet lent
u of their so kind a conquerment.
needed he fetch that from farthest Spain
randam could have lent with lesser pain?
gh he perhaps ne'er pass'd the English shore
ain would counted be a conqueror.
air, French-like, stares on his frighted head,
ock, Amazon-like, dishevelled,
he meant to wear a native cord
nce his fates should him that bane afford.
British bare upon the bristled skin
notched is his beard both lip and chin;
inen collar labyrinthian set
e thousand double turnings never met:
leeves half hid with elbow pinionings
he meant to fly with linen wings.
vhen I look and cast mine eyes below
t monster meets my eyes in human show?
ender waist with such an abbot's loin
ever sober nature so conjoin.
t a strawne scarecrow in the new-sown field
'd on some stick the tender corn to shield.

all's and Donne's satires, however, had grown
ed even in Pope's time, and the little-great
er tried to modernise much that Donne had
but who would not rather read Donne in his
guage than in Pope's?

r's "Hudibras" is, perhaps—though never
ed—the most perfect work of its kind ever

"We know little about Butler's history, says
nson; "all that we know of him with certainty
he was poor." To this we may add, that he
nired to be neglected, and that he wrote a
odd, and witty satire that will live as long as
gue lasts. Hypocrisy, and religious hypocrisy
ly, gets well mauled, beaten, and handled in

such lines as these against those who would by make people good :—

> Such as do build their faith upon
> The holy text of pike and gun ;
> Decide all controversies by
> Infallible artillery ;
> And prove their doctrine orthodox
> By apostolic blows and knocks :
> Call Fire, and Sword, and Desolation,
> A godly thorough Reformation,
> Which always must be carried on,
> And still be doing, never done ;
> As if religion were intended
> For nothing else but to be mended ;
> A sect whose chief devotion lies
> In odd perverse antipathies . . . .
> That with more care keep holiday
> The wrong, than others the right way ;
> Compound for sins they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to.

Throughout this satiric poem, in which the Purit the great civil war are severely lashed, there is s plethora of wit and learning that one gets tired very richness. But it is a capital book. It is true stuff; many of its lines have permanently ta place in the English language. Any young mar chooses to buy Butler, to read him by day, and him by night, to absorb him, in fact, and to tra multifarious reading, cannot but become a wittie readier man than he was before. The autho born in 1612, and died in 1680, having been a sonal witness of the events of which he so humor treated.

Chapter XVI.

THE SATIRISTS.

(*Continued.*)

THE preceding chapter closed with the name of Samuel Butler. In the same reign, but taking a very different view of the Puritan cause, and, after Cromwell's death, daring to write thus of him,

> His grandeur he derived from Heaven above,
> For he was great ere Fortune made him so,
> And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
> Made him not greater seem, but greater grow,—

ed John Dryden, a true poet, and one of the greatest our satirists. Certainly, in the satire of heroic or ten- llable verse, no one can on the whole be compared th Dryden, although in ease, majesty, and fluency expression, Charles Churchill comes very near him. he great political satires of the former are now ad- ired simply for their wonderful power of delineating dividual character; but they are so great, in all sentials of satire, that one almost regrets that the et did not *write more* generally. Take, however,

as a finished picture, that of Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, or that of Shaftesbury, or even that of Settle.

Dryden was a busy literary workman, and "whatever he touched he adorned." He not only translated Virgil, but assisted in a translation of Juvenal, thus bringing to our doors, in sound, healthy English, the most vigorous of Latin satirists. How honestly this manly writer hated vice and folly we can judge from the ease with which the splendid living lines leap from his pen. His life was, for a literary man, not unprosperous; he worked hard for his bread, was the recognized chief of authors, and when he died was buried in Westminster Abbey, leaving no greater master of the English language behind him: he was a model for all English satirists. After him, between his death and the rise and culmination of Pope (1688-1744), there was a pause in the singing. Mediocre poets and base imitators had possession of the stage; foolish noblemen, who wrote because it was fashionable, and young clergymen, or Templars, who thought that living by literature was an easy profession, sprung up, and swelled the "mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease." This interval, however, was but short; for, as a critic has remarked, old John Dryden bore fruit to the last, and young Pope was early in flower and in fruit.

The satires of Alexander Pope are particularly worthy of careful perusal by the student bent on self-improvement. Our author's nature as a man had, as is always the case, an immense effect in moulding his character as an author. Small, delicate, deformed; of weak health, and of a timid, retiring disposition, the young poet had a vivid, quick, and correct intellect, prompt to seize, ready to analyze character, and eager to note

)bserve; perhaps physically timid, Pope was men-
brave; with the selfishness of an invalid, he had in
: degree the large heart of a poet, and the courage
h accompanies generous feeling. Brought up in
:ment, he concentrated his affections on himself
his friends; taken notice of and praised by free-
:ers and noblemen high in rank, but loose in reli-
; opinions, and yet himself educated as a Romanist,
ever deserted his faith, though he never sincerely
ved in it. If anything, he was probably at heart
ist. Believing in woman, yet unable, through his
ı appearance and sickly constitution, to win the
: of her whom he loved, he was nevertheless able
ympathise with Swift's love of the good and
:d of the frivolous women of the day; admiring
elegancies of society, yet forbidden to indulge
s chief pleasures, the little great poet had a
l-point of his own, whence he could satirize man-

He therefore was the satirist especially of arti-
society; he stripped the mask from the beau, the
e, the fribble, and the fop; he laughed at the
pous minister, and the empty politician; he showed
ridiculous was the greedy, vulgar citizen. In short,
his not obscure corner, and with the tetchy and
ish references to himself with which an invalid
ıes his friends, he sketched with a true and mar-
usly neat pencil, society as he saw it, and mankind
: presented itself to Alexander Pope. Jacques
ɔt, in etching his beggars and his various scenes
'arisian life, is not more true as to outward form
costume than Pope is to the souls and minds of
e men—seen *without* love, with no grand, broad
d, but with the direct, honest spirit of a partisan

as regarded the enemies of his friends, with a deep sharper hatred when his own heart was touched; a for the rest, with the cool, calm, polished sneer at l its joys and sorrows, its ambitions and its aims, t M. Reynard the Fox has when he—possibly with gr truth—assumes that the grapes are sour.

In reading Pope's "Satires" it is interesting to serve how much their author can say in a line, how thoroughly he understands the weight of wo and the powers of the English language. In his in duction to "The Satires" Pope shows how comple he is endued with the poetic love of self. He ass the public that his "Satires" "are a general bi complaint, which he had no thought of publishing it pleased certain persons to attack, not only the aut writings, but his person, his morals, and his fami and he further declares that it was at the instan Dr. Arbuthnot—a learned, pious, and distingui person—that they were published. Then he pic *himself* as persecuted by would-be poets, and as l so powerful and popular that all good and evi placed to his account.

> Is there a parson, much be-mused in beer,
> A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer,
> A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
> Who pens a stanza when he should engross?
> Is there, who lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
> With desperate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
> All fly to Twit'nam, and in humble strain
> Apply to ME to keep them mad or vain.
> Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
> Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause.
> Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
> And curses wit, and poetry, and Pope.

He is king, you see; and while he exalts himse

does in admirable lines, of which every word and ry letter are in the right place—he contrives to der literature ridiculous and its professors madmen, ls, and beggars. One lives

> High in Drury Lane,
> Lull'd by soft zephyrs through the broken pane.

other is "compelled by hunger" to print. Authors : of his own set are "scribblers" who are never med; spiders of mere words, of one of whom it is l—

> Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain,—
> The creature's at his dirty work again.

d in a thousand happy but unhappy lines Pope unds literature, and makes it bleed at a thousand es. It is possible that to these clever "Satires" is part owing the neglect of literature and the fine arts t the court and high society have ever shown since se days, and which culminates in these.

When Pope flies at high game, his song rises. His racter of Addison is so clever that we believe it nted from the life: he is

> Bless'd with each talent and each art to please,
> And born to write, converse, and live with ease.

e is one whom

> True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires.

otice the perfect use of the adjectives. But yet he ddison) is too desirous to rule alone; he can

> Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne;

is gifted

> With scornful yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate *for arts that* caused himself to rise;

he can

> Damn with faint praise, attend with civil leer,
> And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
> Alike, reserved to blame, or to commend,
> A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
> Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
> And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;[1]
> Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
> And sit attentive to his own applause;
> Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

Mr. Thackeray, who admired Addison very n denied that this character was true; but, after an a tive study of the two men, we are convinced that as true as it is subtle and artistic, and indeed exceedingly like the character of Thackeray him hence, probably, that great author's fellow-fee Throughout the "Satires" the happiest single abound, full of witty expression and the most cible antithesis. He says of a nobleman, wh tended Dryden's funeral, that—

> He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve;

he pictures another (Lord Hervey, a literary thus—

> Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
> As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
> Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
> And as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks
> Or, at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
> Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
> In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
> Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;
> His wit all see-saw between that and this—
> Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
> And he himself one vile antithesis.

[1] Always then pronounced *obleeged*; as Fr. *obliger*, *oblig*

All Pope's works are throughout just as masterly in intent, if not quite so finished. His "Imitations of Dr. Donne," his "Satires from Horace," his "Characters of Women," are each and all full of excellent scholarly work, and lines which furnish apt quotations on all sorts of topics. The work which, now least read, at one time made the most noise, is "The Dunciad," wherein Pope attacks his assailants or fancied enemies, and gibbets and renders ridiculous literature itself. Henceforward Grub Street poverty, bailiffs, debtors' prisons, and want—things not held in very high esteem in the world—became associated with the professional writer. His true mission, that of an elevator and a teacher, was lost sight of, and he came to be regarded as a mean creature, except by the very wise. His very patrons did not feel themselves honoured by his alliance, but began truly to *patronise* him in the modern and objectionable sense of the word. His friend was henceforth his evil genius.

> But see what ills the scholar's life assail—
> Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail,

wrote Johnson. We have said that to the world, except to the very wise, the author lost his power; but the wise see it still. "I would rather," said Napoleon, "have three armies against me than two able newspaper editors."

Of women, whose characters Pope has sketched with great but hostile skill, our satirist could not entertain, as we have shown, a very elevated idea: and yet his "Characters" are well worth attentive study by the weaker sex. The crying sin he brings against them in the often-quoted line—

Most women have no characters at all,[1]

is with greater and wiser men their very highest
The characterless women—the soft, ductile, l
gentle natures of Shakespeare, Ophelia, Imoge
Desdemona—make the best wives; and indeed
ing wisdom from the true men they love, they
very perfection of Nature's chief handiwork.

Pope's rank as a poet—irrespective of his m
a satirist—has been the subject of much dispute
thoughts are not deep, but they are compa
sound, according to his lights. He never tir
readers, has a thousand beauties, is ingenious,
strength of a peculiar kind, witty, learned, obs
He seldom rises, but he never falls, and whate
writes is worth reading and studying. He ha
good lines, lines that are remembered and q
than any other poet of his bulk. He liked
thought like Horace—a gentleman, who wrote f
tlemen; not for the poor, nor the whole world,
the rich and well-to-do only. In his ambition
ceeded, as every man will succeed, if his amb
vigorous and lasting. He grew to be the most p
with the educated and rich, of all poets, the d
room philosopher, and the man of the world.

[1] "Moral Essays," ii. l. 2.

Chapter XVII.

THE SATIRISTS.

(Continued.)

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745), a wonderful genius, who did every thing he did do as no other man of the time could do it, next deserves to be mentioned as a satirist. He seems to have been born . man-hater in some measure,—one who neither he world nor the world's ways, and who spoke ıd with intense feeling against both men and . On the ivory handle of a pen-knife we ad engraved a motto that applies to Swift— to mend;" and it is mentioned here, because ray's want of appreciation of this great man, ited approval, and his hesitated dislike, have o generally followed. Swift was the most power- n of his day in England. There was no one— ds, Commons, or bench of bishops—who could him; he had the best brain and he knew it. r. Hannay, "He held probably the most potent n that a writer has ever held in this country;

but all the while held it in a dubious and unr
way. He was the patron of men of let
them places, and got them money. He cra
Ministers, and his pen was not employed in
hoops or patches, or sneering at City peopl
an engine of power over all England. He
an orator does his tongue—to do something
Ministers dreaded him, flattered him, courted
yet felt that he was their master! As he h
to govern England, so that his name occu
public history of the time, I suppose he expe
land to do something for him in return."

Swift's satire is essentially manly and strong
it is often what many people call "nasty."
even to point out to women their offensive w
want of personal cleanliness—too common i
—and most people called him a beast for
but he was no beast. We cannot here ente
unhappy life. Suffice it to say, that, with a
dread of madness; unable to marry, yet lo
beloved; generous to all friends, yet negle
despised; loving power and the Court, yet
to a desert; eloquent enough to move an ac
the noblest scholars, yet condemned to preac
or four untaught Irish hinds and his own cl
preserved the faith of a Christian, the tende
friend, and the heart of a philanthropist.
well defended himself in some of the noble
deepest, and saddest verses ever written—
his own death:—

> As Rochefoucauld his maxims drew
> From Nature, I believe them true:
> They argue no corrupted mind
> In him; the fault is in mankind.

And he further tells us, in a pleasant picture of ladies playing at cards and talking of his death ("The Dean is dead! Pray what is trumps?") what he has done, and how he has been treated. "His wealth," he says, is bequeathed

> To public uses. There's the whim;
> What had the public done for him?

And of his works he speaks thus:—

> I cannot tell what critics thought 'em,
> But this I know, the public bought 'em,
> As with a moral view design'd
> To please and to reform mankind:
> And if he often miss'd his aim,
> The world must own it, to their shame,
> The praise is his, and theirs the blame.
> He gave the little wealth he had
> To build a house for fools or mad,
> To show by one satiric touch
> No nation wanted it so much.
> The kingdom he hath left his debtor,
> I wish it soon may have a better;
> And since you dread no further lashes,
> Methinks you may forgive his ashes.

Swift's works are not to be read nor to be enjoyed by young people, with the exception of the immortal "Gulliver," the most cutting satire on mankind ever written; but when men and women are grown up and know the world, then indeed no deeper nor wiser guide can be taken. "A Tale of a Tub" is an admirable, pure satire on religious disputants. English society under Queen Anne and the Georges was very corrupt, and Swift was one of those men who dared to speak the truth of it: hence he was received with general hatred. He introduced into literature a great deal of humour, and what is now known as *fun*. He first

commenced a kind of savings bank for the poc never tired of doing kind services for those wh weak; was never tired equally of lashing thc were strong; was the kindest, firmest, tenderes in the world; how then could the world hat Here is the secret: he knew it too well, and w of probing it. Holding the sacerdotal office honour, he saw the clergy in those days treate than we now treat footmen, and he satirically it. "Madam," said he to a lady, "you're nc to treat me like your poor prig of a parson again, he poured out to a young curate of his glass of wine, rather thick, saying, "I always k bottoms of my bottles for some poor thing o son." The gentleman, seeing his humour, t wine meekly, saying he was glad enough to g "Then I'm hanged if you shall drink it," s Dean; "*I'll drink that myself*—here's a fres for you. Only I said the same to a young cl other day, and *he did not understand me*, but f out of the room." Let us take care that *w* stand Swift; for it is worth while to study him to gain that understanding thoroughly. Th martyr, without the martyr's cause or crown, c ness which is his shield; that dethroned king, ing sceptreless in lower kingdoms; that gr tender heart, always so lonely, and beloved ev made more miserable; that fine broad forehe those sweet, tender eyes, with a foreshadow trouble, and ultimate madness. "The stage d ere the curtain fell," says Scott of him; and he said, looking at a tree in the park in Dublin *like* that tree; I shall die at the top." He di

the top. For a whole year he was melancholy mad and silent; and he now lies amongst his adopted people, whom he loved so well and served so heartily, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin,—a lonely and a neglected grave. His unhappiness seems to have followed him to his grave. Many people write about him—few understand him; the women abuse him about *Stella* and *Vanessa;* the men who love the world find that his blows still hurt and jar them; so that he lives in a solitary splendour, admired by all, but loved and worshipped by few. Of his prose works I may say more hereafter.

Samuel Johnson (1709—1784), a more amiable, but equally strong man in his way, is also a satirist to be studied. He did not write much verse, but what he wrote was good and noble. He is not a biting, stinging satirist like Swift, nor a courtly, fine, splendid writer like Pope, but a sturdy moralist, who, in weighty lines, gives weighty advice; and, while he tells us to avoid the end and follies of Hannibal, Wolsey, Charles of Sweden, and others, he sketches their characters with a true power. He has occasionally the strength and magnificence of Dryden himself. His "London," in imitation of Juvenal, is better than the original, sharing this honour probably with only one other piece, Coleridge's "Death of Wallenstein," which transcends Schiller's. His "Vanity of Human Wishes" Scott has called "a satire, the pathetic and deep morality of which often draws tears from those whose eyes wander dry over pages professedly sentimental." It is more than this—it is a satire, which does more honour to humanity than twenty thousand sermons; nay, it is

itself a fine sermon in rhyme. Let the ambitio ponder these lines :—

> Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
> Shall Wolsey's wealth with Wolsey's end be thine?
> Or liv'st thou now, with safer pride content,
> The wisest justice on the banks of Trent?
> For why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate,
> On weak foundations raise the enormous weight?
> Why, but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
> With louder ruin to the gulfs below.
> What gave great Villiers to the assassin's knife,
> And fix'd disease on Harley's closing life?
> What murder'd Wentworth, and what exiled Hyde.
> By kings protected, and to kings allied?
> What but their wish indulged in courts to shine,
> And power too great to keep, or to resign!

Yet, he tells us, man can be happy if he leave Heaven the measure and the choice, and prays obedient passions and a will resigned :—

> For Love, which scarce collective man can fill;
> For Patience, sovereign o'er transmitted ill;
> For Faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
> Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat:
> These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,
> These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain:
> With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
> And makes the happiness she does not find.

That gifted but erratic satiric poet, Charles Chu (1731—1764), must not be forgotten. On his s and sad career it is not my intention to dwell. verse is fluent and vigorous, though at times a rough and inharmonious. He is a very great sat who has yet to wait for justice to be done him. " Rosciad" throws much interesting light on the sta the stage in the last century. It is to be rem bered, however, that he did not write with th *lemnity* and high moral purpose of such w

en and Johnson; and therefore the lessons con-
l by his works are sometimes of little value.
is scarcely necessary to ask the indulgence of the
:r for the omission of a crowd of minor poets of
ighteenth century—most of them mere imitators
ope, and repeaters of elegant commonplaces. I
ust call the student's attention to a few of the
: prominent names.

the ten-syllable verse, which Dryden had made
)rcible, and Pope had polished to so great a
ance, Dr. Young especially distinguished himself
s satires, "The Love of Fame," &c. But he is
:hind Pope, whom he much resembles.

:et high truth triumph! What can be more great?
'othing but merit in a low estate—

)ther couplets are much like Pope's best things.
g, however, a truly religious good man, left the
t to join the Church, and became famous by a
called "The Complaint, or Night Thoughts," a
vindicating Christianity, and abounding with
sayings and thoughts. But that makes it none
ess tedious; no one was ever known who had
"Hudibras" through at one sitting; and no one
l read the "Night Thoughts" through, though a
ly different poem, from the same cause. It is
ılly too sarcastic, too striking. It begins with a
tiful image worthy of Shakespeare, and perhaps
nsciously imitated from him:—

Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep!
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes:
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.

The poem is also full of fine lines, now embedded in the English tongue; and yet to read it is a task, because of its laboriously antithetical style, its stilted parallels, and bombastic address. Such lines as—

Lorenzo! to recriminate is just.

Lysander! happy past the common lot—

would weigh down any poem; but the student must not be deterred, but read Young's works.

Gray is another poet who will never be out of date, yet he is despised by pretenders on account of his uniform excellence. When General Wolfe was about to attack Quebec, in that great battle which gave the English Canada, it is said that, rowing with a few of his officers down the St. Lawrence with muffled oars, Wolfe repeated to his companions Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard," and paused on the fine stanza which closes with the line

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

As he ended the recitation he said, "Now, gentlemen, I would rather have written that fine poem than take Quebec." Truly, the poem will be remembered when the famous battle is forgotten. Thomas Gray, D.D., is to be studied as a learned, somewhat cold, but scholarly poet, who wrote very little, but wrote very well. Others followed him, or were contemporary with him, who had more of the freedom which the muse loves—Gay, Matthew Prior, Parnell, Allan Ramsay, James Thomson, author of the "Seasons;" and these should be read. Lastly, writing in Pope's vein, are three fine authors, poets, yet not poets in the esoteric sense—Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, and William Cow-

per; and these bring us into the nineteenth century, or to the era of the poets who specially distinguished it. Of Johnson's satirical poetry I have already treated: his other pieces are didactic, strong, solid, and moral. He was great in verse, greater in prose; but as a versifier much finer than many people think. His lines on Charles XII. ending with the couplet—

> He left a name at which the world grew pale,
> To paint a moral or adorn a tale—

have seldom been excelled. His friend Goldsmith was a truer poet, sweeter, more natural, and lighter; and no one must omit to read the "Traveller," and the "Deserted Village." "He touched nothing," said Johnson, "that he did not adorn;" and "it is easier to prove that his numbers are not true poetry than to write like him." Allan Ramsay, who adopted the fetters of the heroic couplet, has written the sweetest modern love pastoral, "The Gentle Shepherd," to which we shall refer in the next chapter; and William Cowper has written several poems, which in spite of prosaic friends, bad taste, religious misery and mistakes, and other surroundings, which detract from their *verve* and true *afflatus*, are yet manly and true poems, full of musical truths, and happily so pure, so Christian, and so good, that they have carried not only consolation but literature into thousands of homes, whose doors would otherwise have been shut against the "worldly and profane" muses of higher children of song.

With these poets the effects of the libertinism of Charles and the dull materialism of Anne—effects seen, of course, in Johnson, Cowper, and Goldsmith, more in the fetters of measured verse than anything

else—died, after a long, long reign. Henceforward Poetry rises as the fabled bird from its death-bed, and plumes its golden wings, purified, elate, and full of strength to take new flight, and we hope—even in our own day—to reach the highest Heaven of Song.

Chapter XVIII.

SCOTTISH POETS.

THE two large islands that lie to the north-west corner of Europe, England and Ireland, are inhabited, as we have every day abundant proof, by a very mixed race, not perhaps thoroughly fusible, but by the of many centuries. Two large and simple divi- nay be made of these inhabitants—the German- (whom we call, in a somewhat barbarous fa- the Anglo-Saxon), and the Celtic. The larger, iberal, and stronger race, slower, and more heavily drifted down, by a certain proclivity it has, to tter and better parts of the island; while to the s and top of it the Celtic either retired, or was . No doubt these Celts, with their quick wit, faces, high cheek-bones, deep feelings of insult evenge, flashes of intense merriment, but deep um of melancholy, wrote some splendid poetry. of it, wild and nebulous enough, remains in 's rhapsodies, which is poetic in its expansion, sembles, in more than one instance, the Romaic ouman *poetry; and,* it seems to us, in tone and

matter, imagery and exaggeration, betrays its East
origin. Much, too, must remain in a fragmentary st
in snatches of song and legend, in the Welsh and I
languages. On this we cannot pronounce; but
hear from competent scholars that its character is
of a dying race—sombre, melancholy, and grand
That it ever reached any great polish or height, is n
than any one now can say. Of course, the "Od
Gray, a magnificent performance, in which he m
the Welsh bards curse King Edward in good r
numbers,—

> Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!
> Confusion on thy banners wait!

is as far from being anything like that which the
would have said, as are the excellent disquisitior
marriage and morality, in "Rasselas, Prince of
sinia," by Johnson, from the notions of a true ba
African. Real Irish, Welsh, and Scottish poetr
Celtic in language and character, is as dead as
Priam, and will never, by any means or miracle,
the heart of a nation again. This is a sad reflec
but change is constant and inevitable. The rock
and decay. The grand poet, who endures longer
the monuments of nations, lies embalmed in a
language, and is little known to the mass of those
occupy the land of his birth.

The people of those portions of the island, fi
one tongue decay, did their best to preserve
thoughts and noble impulses by embalming them
provincial dialect like that of Cornwall, of Lanca
Devonshire, and of the Lowlands of Scotland
this latter is what we are about to treat of. Day b
it has been becoming less uncouth, less full of

xon phrases, (for the Saxons had penetrated into the)wlands,) and less thickly sown with local and Celtic ıases picked up from the Highlanders. Modified ' these circumstances, the tongue has been called :otch; and, led away by a broad pronunciation, hich we opine is actually much more Saxon and true an our modern English, misled by this "manly oric," the Scots Lowlanders have claimed a literature their own. To whatever glory it has, they are wel-)me. The spirit of Scotch poetry is that of the people -open, manly, free, independent, warm-hearted, full f love and honesty; this, then, is their glory, whatever :cident may have modified their *a's* and *o's*, or to hatever branch of language theirs may belong.

The early Scots poets seem to have burst into song t the same time which witnessed the wonderful intel- :ctual activity of the English. Contemporary with haucer, John Barbour, who is said to have been born ı 1320, and to have died in 1395, wrote a metrical fe of King Robert Bruce; King James I. of Scotland, orn in 1394, wrote "The King's Quhair" in 1424; nd Andrew Wyntoun, who is said to have died in 425, compiled a metrical chronicle of Scotland. But ıe greatest Scottish poet of that period was Bishop awain Douglas, born in 1471, whose "Palace of honour," and translation of Virgil's "Æneid" still re- in a very high rank in Scottish poetry. Then, with ıe exception of Sir Richard Maitland, a judge, (born ı 1496, and died in 1586,) we may reckon that from eorge Buchanan, the Scottish Ovid, (born in 1506, ied in 1582,) to Drummond, of Hawthornden, (born ı 1585, died in 1649,) the century from 1550 to 1650 itnessed the greatest galaxy of poets that Scotland

has ever known. It will not be necessary for t
dent of English literature to make the acquaint
many of these. These poets and gentleme
nothing essentially Scottish about them; indeed
little alteration of spelling, they might write nc
in measure and feeling be perfectly English.
Alexander Scot, (1562,) in his "Rondel of Lc
which we extract the most Scottish verse—

Luve is ane fervent fire,
Kindillit without desire,
Short plesour, lang displesour;
Repentence is the hire
Ane pure tresour, without mesour;
Luve is ane fervent fire.

This is very pretty, neat, and sweet, as a lov
but, with the exception of the Norman termi
the spelling is English, or what we call English
day. Take again a most beautiful song, said t
Sir Robert Ayton, (1570-1638,) who was a fr
Ben Jonson's. This is purely English; an
Robert Carruthers, very justly, Burns spoilt it
dering it into Scotch. We give two verses of i

I do confess thou'rt smooth and fair,
And I might have gone near to love thee;
Had I not found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak had power to move th
But I can let thee now alone
As worthy to be loved by none.

I do confess thou'rt sweet, yet find
Thee such an unthrift of thy sweets,
Thy favours are but like the wind,
That kisses everything it meets.
And since thou canst with more than one,
Thou'rt worthy to be kiss'd by none.

With George Buchanan and Arthur Johnsto
learned Scotsmen, and the best Latinists of the

we need not look for any difference from the learned poets of other countries, unless in the fact that they surpassed others. Buchanan is called the Scottish Ovid; and he certainly wrote Latin with a sweet smoothness which pleases the ear while it does not cloy it. Buchanan has been blamed by some critics for turning David's psalms into Latin hexameters and pentameters; but to our ears there is something very sweet in his translation of the 137th Psalm, "By the waters of Babylon:"—

> Dum procul a patriâ mæsti Babylonis in oris;
> Fluminis ad liquidas forte sedemus aquas.

At most, in this wide-reading age, we can recommend the student to welcome these old poets, should he find them; they have much in them worth preservation, and they will open new veins of thought, and afford us quaint examples of the history of our common tongue.

A very different man, although a courtier with the best of them, is a strong, forcible satirist, Sir David Lyndsay, of whom Sir Walter Scott writes:—

> Still is thy name of high account,
> And still thy verse has charms,
> Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount,
> Lord Lyon King-at-Arms.

Lyndsay, in 1512, became gentleman usher to Prince James, afterwards James V., and died about 1588. He is celebrated for his strong, nervous, biting satires against the clergy, whom he seems to have hated and to have thoroughly despised. He hated them, however, not for their religion, but on account of their want of it. According to his account, the priests of the day *were ignorant,* boastful, thievish, and lustful.

They did not even know the little Latin th
know—

> And mickle Latin he did mumble ;
> I heard nothing but humble-bumble.

His longest satirical work is called "The Sat
Three Estates," and is in the dramatic for
well worth reading: it is colloquial, manly, a
now and then bursts, like a Scotch thistle,
bloom, all through its roughnesses and prick
Church, the nobles, the law, get many a rub
feel—such is the genius of the writer—that al
thoroughly deserved it. The language is, as
said, very Scotch; but though overloaded v
spelling and unnecessary letters, the words are
Let the reader read aloud to himself for so
and these disguises will fall off. At the e
edition of Lyndsay, printed by John Skott
simply *Scot*, of course), there is a quaint cautic
other editions, thus: "*The quhikis ar verray
ar nocht worthe ane plake.*"

If any one takes care to read such quee
phonetically, he at once reduces it to plain
What is called Scotch, lies, like Shakespeare's
jest, as much in the ear of him that hears it
wit of him that makes it. It is in truth
English.

Bearing this in mind, we need love Scotla
not less. And it is to be remarked that the
land has, like a cruel and ungenerous mothe
her sons with a flood of love which neither
change can alter. "The land of brown he
been fertile in poets and in warriors; but all

or almost all of them, have the bravery of the warrior and the feeling and woman's heart of the poet, however rough may be the shell that hides the kernel of the nut.

From those men whom we have named, to Allan Ramsay and some few others in the eighteenth century, the poets of Scotland were almost dumb. While the noise of battle and the clatter of religious contest rages, the Muses are silent. There are poetic hearts still beating, but little poetic expression. Hallam, whose "History of Literature" closes at the year 1700, mentions few or no Scotch poets of eminence, save George Buchanan and his rival Johnston, and even the industrious Robert Chambers, and the acute and erudite Robert Carruthers, in their history of literature, make a jump from one to the other. But if clouds are before us, and, intervening between the sun and the spectator, hide the beauties of the heavens, he shines nevertheless; so also the poetic spirit was doubtless alive in Scotland, though it struggled unsuccessfully behind the clouds of hatred, war, and bloodshed, which hid and blotted out its effulgence.

Even when the Scottish muse did assert itself, it did so in an English dress; and truly such poets—and none of them are very great ones—as James Thomson, author of "The Seasons," Mallet, Hamilton, Beattie, and Blair, although possessing Scotch names, have neither the national feeling nor the national merit. David Mallet, for instance, changed his name from Mallock or O'Malloch, which was Celtic and Scottish, to Mallet, which sounded more English; and probably, too many of these authors, instead of feeling their hearts beat higher on being claimed for Scotsmen, would

feel rather ashamed of their glorious old cot
Scotland need not therefore feel very enthusias
claiming them.

But there is one man of whom Scotland may f
proud as he felt of her, and that is Allan R
(1685-1758), a genuine good poet, a warm-he
honest man, a sound Scotsman, and a true g
Ramsay was one of the salt of the earth; and i
be that England too may be proud of him, for his n
was one Alice Bower, whose father had come
Derbyshire to teach the Scots miners their bu
Born of humble parents, apprenticed to a wig-
marrying the daughter of a poor writer (an attc
rising from the post of a barber to that of a book
gifted with English tenderness and Scotch coura
hopefulness, this man was from the sole of his f
the crown of his head a gentleman. You can
in his heart, his courage, his hopefulness. Yc
read it in his poems, his truthfulness to wom
honesty in telling the truth to them, his love o
dren, of marriage, with its chaste loves and hon
ties. And the heart of the man endured well th
many trials, and, above others, the trial of a
competency and honest success, literary prais
well-earned fame. Ramsay's fame now depend
his chief and most beautiful poem, "The Gentle
herd," published in 1725, and some few songs.
Gentle Shepherd," which in the opinion of ma
work of higher merit than any put forward by I
Burns, is a sweet pastoral comedy, in which a
outlawed chieftain comes to his own again,
which, as in that sweetest pastoral the world ha
seen, "As You Like it," the shepherds and the

lasses are the chief personages. It turns upon courtship, love, and married life; it treats these clearly, fairly, and sweetly; and we know of no better book for young people to read who are going to be married. From the rustic courtship in Act I., where Pattie tells Roger how he won his Meg, commencing—

> Last morning I was gay, and early out;
> Upon a dike I leaned, glow'ring about;
> I saw my Meg come linkin o'er the lea;
> I saw my Meg, but Meggy saw na me,—

to the dialogue between Peggy and Jenny, in a succeeding Act, there is nothing but a succession of pleasingly innocent and fine pictures. There is no nonsense about the humour or about the wit. George Eliot got great praise some time ago for Mrs. Poyser's retort to "Well, women are terrible bad ones, at any rate;" "Ay, so they are, but I reckon God Almighty made them to match the men;" but Ramsay had anticipated this in sweetest verse:—

> Love, in whispers let us ken
> That men were made for us, and we for men.

And the silly yet deplorable dispute as to the excellence of men and women, and the duty of women towards their husbands, may receive many a worse solution than the following true and good advice. Peggy is persuading Jenny to marry. Jenny suggests that "a dish o' married luve right soon grows cauld," and that, after some years at least, a younger beauty may make her husband "think his half-worn Meg and her kenn'd kisses hardly worth a feg." Then Peggy answers:—

> Nae mair o' that. Dear Jenny, to be free,
> There's some men constanter in love than we.
> Nor is the ferly great, when Nature kind
> *Has blest them wi'* solidity of mind.

They'll reason calmly, an' wi' kindness smile,
When our short passions wad our peace beguile;
Sae, whensoe'er they slight their wives at hame,
'Tis ten to ane the wives are maist to blame.
Then I'll employ wi' pleasure a' my art
To keep him cheerfu', an' secure his heart.
At e'en, when he comes weary frae the hill,
I'll hae a' things made ready to his will.
In Winter, when he toils thro' wind an' rain,
A bleezing ingle an' a clean hearthstane;
An' soon as he flings by his plaid an' staff,
The seething pots be ready to take aff;
Clean hag-a-bag I'll spread upon his board,
An' serve him wi' the best we can afford;
Good humour an' white bigonets shall be
Guards to my face, to keep his love for me.

Allan Ramsay was also the author of some ve beautiful songs, which are sung at the present tin His play, too, is, we believe, still acted by peasants the country parts of Scotland, and, we have heard, ev in the backwoods of Canada. John Gay, the friend Pope, the London man of letters, the owner at tl time of twenty thousand pounds of South Sea Sto when on a visit to the Duke and Duchess of Quee bury, used to lounge into Allan Ramsay's shop, a read the poem over to the author, getting him to plain the Scots words, so that he might convey true spirit to Alexander Pope, who was amazingly fc of the poem. What a picture would this scene mal little dumpty, fat, good-natured John Gay; tall, sha shrewd, and humorous Allan Ramsay; the vivac and light of genius on each face contrasting with darkness of the bookseller's shop.

Alexander Ross, author of "Wooed and Marr and a'," published in 1758, John Lowe, who wr "Mary's Dream," and one or two others, have names merely to be remembered as tacked to th

songs; but, so fickle is fame, that one author will go down to posterity with the fame of a song as well as or better than another with many volumes. Lady Ann Barnard, in 1771, published a beautiful ballad known as "Auld Robin Gray," and for reasons best known to herself, she kept the secret for fifty years. In 1823 she acknowledged the authorship in a letter to Sir Walter Scott. Robert Ferguson (1750-1774) was a young man of great poetic genius, but of an irregular and miserable life—miserable through his own irregularities and dissipations. He is to be remembered as the model, in some sort, of Burns; of whom, says a Scotch critic, he may be reckoned as a poetical progenitor. As a proof how near he came to him, we will quote a couple of verses of his rhapsody in honour of "Braid Claith," (Broad Cloth,) or good clothes; in which our readers will see that Ferguson has not only the metre, but the manner which Burns made so famous,—

Braid claith lends fouk an unca heeze,
Maks mony kail-worms butterflees,
Gees mony a doctor his degrees
For little skaith:
In short, you may be what you please
For guid braid claith.
For though ye had as wise a snout on
As Shakespeare or Sir Isaac Newton,
Your judgment fouk would hae a doubt on,
I'll tak my aith,
Till they could see ye wi' a suit on
O' guid braid claith.

Poor Ferguson died in the cell of a madhouse, October, 16, 1774, and was buried in a poor grave in the Canongate churchyard, where his remains lay unknown and unmarked for twelve years, until Robert Burns,

the greatest poet of Scotland, put up a hum
morial to his preceptor and predecessor. The
be among the minor Scotch poets other names
of a passing word; but they are few, and by nc
great. We may mention Robert Crawford, (diec
author of "Tweedside" and the "Bush abo
quiar;" John Skinner, author of "Tulochg
Sir Gilbert Elliot, and Miss Jane Elliot; but t
liance and power of Robert Burns and Sir Walte
of whom we shall treat in another chapter, ov
and hide the very names of smaller poets. It
however, that the student should know that e
greatest poet shines with a reflected lustre; a
brilliant as may be his genius, he does not ref
absorb all the true poetry and feeling in the
As there are conquerors who are never menti
history, and whose triumphs are not publishe
Gazette, so there are martyrs who suffer the pa
who miss the palm of martyrdom, and true po
feel all the honest rhapsody of genius, but whos
are silent, and whose songs are never heard.

Chapter XIX.

POLITICAL AND METAPHYSICAL WRITERS.

THAT very deep thinker, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in one of those conversation evenings at Highgate, in which he so tersely discussed every question brought before him, and threw a brilliant flash of ght on every subject raised, said, "There have been ree *silent revolutions* in England; first, when the pro- ssions fell off from the Church; secondly, when lite- ture fell off from the professions; and thirdly, when e Press fell off from literature."

Now that is a very remarkable collection of sen- nces, and we ask our readers to think over and look it.

What was the military revolution of 1645, or the olitical revolution of 1688, or the Reform Bill, or Ca- olic Emancipation, in which soldiers, nobles, kings, wyers, took part, compared to those revolutions which lone rendered the historic ones possible? Let our

most unlearned reader imagine the Church, the Supr
Roman Catholic Church, holding within itself all
learning and all the professions in the world.
Church was the law, the Church was the physic
the Church was the writer, the Church was everyth
the king and the soldier were her servants. But
professions fell off from the Church, and henceforv
she held but a maimed existence: the reign, the a
lute reign, of the priest was over for ever. Then Le
ing clung to two objects—Religion on one side,
Learning (law, physic, and science) on the other;
these soon degenerated into cant and hobgoblin m
rendering it possible for such men as Paracelsus
Michael Scot to excite attention as magicians and
jurors. Then came another secession: Literature
off from the professions; nay, opposed them. Lea
men no longer wrote merely for learned men. T
emancipated themselves from the trammels of
schools, and came out into plain day addressing
people. Then instantly a flood of light came u
us, and the Church felt that it was not able,
Peter, in Swift's admirable satire, "to lock up
father's will in an old Grecian and Italian b
i. e., to keep the Bible imprisoned in dead tong
so the Bible, once free, became the great enem
feudality, and to the old system of the world. By
criticism of literary men, by their attacks on the B
that wondrous book became stronger and stror
No longer dared the priest to say, "This is my bo
let me interpret it." The layman said, "This b
I find, abolishes you; you are no longer *Magi*
doctor, and priest, but merely the minister and
interpreter. *I* too am the Church; *I* too am a

and a priest." The whole race was elevated by these sentences, spelt out with difficulty at first, but seen clearly at last by the hard-headed and hard-handed people. Then, Literature having done its work, there came another secession; and the Press became an institution and a power. It did not mix itself with purely literary matters; a journalist was no longer necessarily a learned man, but he was all the more a suggester and a politician. He criticised the functions of kings, debated peace or war, sat in judgment upon the decisions of judges, and mingled in the active work of the world. Now, these three silent revolutions are unquestionably the most important and vigorously active revolutions ever known. The whole maddening turmoil of 1793, when the guillotine did its horrible work, and blood ran inch-deep in the Paris gutters, and men's heads were removed by the sack-load, was nothing to any one of these.

The result of the first of these revolutions it becomes necessary for us to look to, in order to understand one portion,—a somewhat prosaic one, but in many ways full of interest.

As this and the preceding chapters are intended as a guide to what should be read, and to that which is most worth reading, rather than a history of literature itself, although that is of course incidentally touched upon, I shall not be expected in this branch to take different epochs in strict chronological order, but rather to cite the chief writers who have worked in the great cause. And here I may earnestly say that, owing all her freedom, and all that she possibly can gain by freedom, to the suggestions of her writers, *Great Britain has* been singularly ungrateful to these

great men; and her authors, who in themselves ha
been her chief glory, have, through her treatment
them, been her chief shame. As a writer observes
Lord Bacon, the greatest of English philosophers,
may it be said of all, "Much of his contemporanec
fame is to be ascribed to his public position, whi
first drew the attention of a frivolous age to his wor
It was the possession of the Great Seal that made
fashionable to read what few could understand, push
his works into circulation in his immediate age, a
gave him Europe for an auditory." This great m
of whose "Essays" we have already spoken, first p
lished them in 1597, in a small octavo volume, conta
ing (10) "Essayes and Religious Meditations and Pl
of Perswasion and Disswasion." In 1605 he publish
"Twoo Books of the Proficience and Aduancem
of learning, diuine and humane;" and he publish
these great works it is to be noted, not in Latin
although the second was afterwards translated i
that tongue by his orders—but in English, so that t
"may come home to men's business and bosom
They were put into Latin, not because that was
tongue of the learned, but that Latin being the u
versal language, "they," he says, with a true kn
ledge of their value, "may last as long as books la
His great philosophical work, "Instauratio Mag
(*i. e.*, Novum Organum, sive Indicia de vera Interp
tatione Naturæ,)" was issued in folio at London
1620, with a preface and dedication to King Jam
In it Bacon, although a strict churchman, had t
boldness to break away from the Church and t
schools, in following out knowledge. He pointed
that it was impossible to limit man's efforts in physi

inquiry; and he was the first to assert the great principle that knowledge is power. "The immortal aphorism," says the writer cited, "Homo Naturæ minister et interpres" (Man is the servant-priest and interpreter of Nature) with which he opens the "Novum Organum," is the epitome of his views; and at one stroke he disposes of all the cosmogony and contentions of the ancients. His mind brooded over all Nature; he indeed looked through Nature up to Nature's God. He lived in a period hardly freed from the persecutions of, it may be a well-meaning, but an ignorant Church, in which human reason was pent up in cloistered divinity and school ethics. Ramus had been sacrificed for his defence of Protestantism; Vanini and Giordano Bruno were burnt as atheists; Campanella was driven from city to city; and after Bacon's time Galileo was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome for asserting that the earth was but a planet and moved round the sun, and Descartes was punished and persecuted by the tribunals of Protestant Holland. But Bacon came to deliver us from the idols to which the soul of man had been bound. These were the Idols of the Tribe, the Idols of the Den, the Idols of the Theatre, and the Idols of the Market; sentences which seem very curious, but which once taken into the mind remain for ever. The Idols of the Tribe are the natural defects of man, which Bacon gives us rules how to overcome; the Idols of the Den are the defects of individuals, their circumstances and education, "whence they are so warped to particular truths, as to have a partial or total inability to acquire other sorts of knowledge." The Idols of the Market are the *defects in words.* Man is weak, knows not how to

express himself; the limitation of words must the
fore, to a great extent, always exist. "When we
tempt to rear a temple to Heaven we must not be
mindful of the confusion of tongues." Here follo
a case in point; by *theatre*, in his phrase the "Id
of the Theatre," Bacon means much more than we
These idols, which hinder men from seeing God,
as any image must, are erroneous theories wh
hinder us from arriving at truth. Kings, religioni
and theologians have come forward with their theatri
theories; "and these theatrical fables," says Bac
"have this in common with dramatic pieces, *that
fictitious narrative is neater, more elegant and plea
than the true history*." Bacon expected that th
"idols would probably grow much more numerou
and how truly that expectation has been verified
be seen in the number of wild theories, republi
Utopias, social improvements, present and ear
heavens, Fourier systems, vulgar Joe Smith New J
salems, emancipations of women, and other balderd
put forward since Bacon's time. It is by an "Ido
the theatre" that Brigham Young has led some hund
thousand of the ignorant of all countries out of
cleanly, natural, and only possible one-wife systen
Christianity into bestial and degrading polygamy.

Bacon published other works, and some histor
treatises; but his "Novum Organum" and "Essa
will always and everywhere be remembered as
chief. His life, by no means, in the acquisition
money, a pure one, has been written with vigour
vividness by Lord Macaulay;[1] with partisan

[1] 1. "Macaulay's Essays: Bacon." 2. "Personal Histo
Lord Bacon," by Hepworth Dixon. 3. "Life of Francis
con." Saunders and Otley. 1861.

tagonism to Macaulay by Mr. Hepworth Dixon; and with great judicial fairness, by Mr. Foad, a barrister. To sum up, we may say with the first, "To make men perfect was no part of Bacon's plan. *His humble aim was to make imperfect men comfortable;* and he did this from great knowledge, and from a very high instinct. The end he aimed at was (1) the relief of man's estate, and to aid in human comfort; (2) *Efficaciter operari ad sublevanda vitæ humanæ incommoda*[1] (to work efficaciously so as to alleviate human ills); (3) to endow humanity with new riches and inventions, nay, continually to endow the human race with new honours and works."[2] In two words, given us by Lord Macaulay, Bacon's great key, with which he would unlock the riches of the world, had two wards—UTILITY and PROGRESS; and most admirably has that key served its purpose.

A much smaller man,—indeed to all subsequent philosophical writers, Lord Bacon is a giant,—yet one who had indications of good about him, is Sir Henry Wotton, some time Lord Provost of Eton; and before that, ambassador to Venice. He it was who made that capital pun upon diplomatic services, namely, that an ambassador was "a gentleman sent to lye abroad for the good of his country;" and in his "State of Christendom" there are some shrewd political hits. The "Reliquiæ Wottonianæ," published after his death, also contains many shrewd observations, and shows that good men were then thinking in favour of the advancement of "the masses," as it has become the fashion to call them.

[1] "De Augmentis," lib. ii. cap. 2.
[2] Ibid. "Novum Organum," lib. i. aphor. 81.

Much more famous is the name of Thomas H
called the philosopher of Malmesbury, where, (
a century before that Revolution to which hi
trines gave so much aid, he was prematurely b
1588, through the fright given his mother by the S
Armada, which was purposed, as Philip and the
well knew, to crush all such learning and indep
thinking out of England and out of the world. A
to Lord Cavendish, Hobbes was, it is pleas
think, intimate with Ben Jonson, Lord Baco
Lord Herbert of Cherbury. In 1631 he undert
superintend another nobleman's education, and
Pisa, where he became intimate with Galileo th
nomer. In 1640 he returned to Paris, where h
on friendly terms with Descartes; in 1647 he
pointed mathematical teacher to Charles, Pr
Wales, afterwards Charles II., and after his de
December, 1679, was published his "Behemot
History of the Civil Wars from 1640 to 1660."
very timid in disposition, evidently from the a
of his birth, and he therefore remained an adhe
the Church of England, but philosophically he
Deist, although he has been called an Atheist.
however, he was not; for he boldly says: "For
as God Almighty is incomprehensible, it followe
we can have no conception or image of the De
cept only this, that *there is a God.* For the effe
acknowledge naturally, do include a Power (
producing before they were produced; and that
presupposeth something existent that hath such
and the thing so existing with power to produ
were not eternal, must needs have been produ
something before it, and that again by somethi

before that, till we come to an Eternal (that is to say the *First*) Power of all power, and First Cause of all causes; and this it is which men conceive by the name of God, implying Eternity, Incomprehensibility, and Omnipotency." If any Atheist, if there be such, will carefully think over and weigh this, he will find that it says in part much the same as does the Athanasian Creed.

But it is not for his theology or his theological views that we should go to Hobbes. His great work is "The Leviathan; or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil," which was anticipated in some measure, and in point of time, by his "Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society," and which was followed, after an intimacy with Selden, Cowley, and Dr. Harvey, (for Hobbes seems to have been very fortunate in knowing really great men,) by his "Letter on Liberty and Necessity," in which he combated the doctrine of Free Will, and expounded that of a Philosophical Necessity. "Man, according to Hobbes," says a writer, "is represented as a selfish and ferocious animal, requiring the strong hand of despotism to keep him in check; and all notions of right and wrong are made to depend upon self-interest alone." This is not a noble view of the noblest animal; but it is precisely the same view that all religious writers take of Unregenerate Man; and it is rather amusing to see excellent bishops coming forward to defend man and to attack Hobbes. "He was a bear," said Charles II., who greatly admired his writings, "against which the Church played its young dogs in order to exercise them." But in spite of his harsh views of life, Hobbes led a peaceful existence,

reading little and thinking much. "If I had read as much as other men I should have been as ignorant as they," he was accustomed to say; but certainly he was well read in the best of the old authors. He is a deep thinker, a bold and courageous exponent of his own views; clear and concise in argument, and very quick to see his point. His great value is, that his chief work is a book for real thinkers, and gives fairly on view of the nature of man. He does not stoop t chronicle wars, marriages, and coronations of kings he concerns himself, not with the nobility, but wit the grander subject of Universal Man. He is a powe ful and an admirable antagonist, and by his masterl and enduring discussions, has freed the human min from many of the follies and errors repeated from ag to age in the schools. His "language is so lucid an concise," says Hallam, "that it would almost be improper to put an algebraical process in differe terms as some of his metaphysical paragraphs." H treatises on Logic, Human Nature, and Governme are still text books, and the influence of these works manifest in the later speculations of Locke, Berkel and Hume: and notwithstanding the subsequent bours of Hartley and Mill, the latter of whom adm that "the character of modern speculation is to a gr degree determined by the writings of Hobbes," an ir mate acquaintance with the ideas of the philosopher Malmesbury is still indispensable for all who wish acquire a mastery of metaphysical science.

Chapter XX.

'ICAL AND METAPHYSICAL WRITERS.

(Continued.)

WHETHER England owes more to her thinkers than to her workers is a question that need scarcely be argued here: suffice it to say that her thinkers have ever been in advance of her workers, and have con- suggested improvements, not only to their own r but to all countries. It would be difficult to ut in any land such a succession of truly great enefactors of their country, in the way of sug- thought, as Great Britain has produced.

ıese, one of the greatest is John Locke, the son ntleman of Somersetshire, where the cottage in ıe was born is still shown; a humble proof of dly lodged the gentry must have been in 1632, ıt the peasantry must have fared worse than at our cows and pigs fare in the matter of lodging.

was educated at Westminster, and then at church, Oxford; and having chosen the pro- of medicine, he made considerable progress in ience, until he found that the delicacy of his

health would prevent him from working at his necessary studies so hard as he wished. He therefore served Sir Henry Vane as secretary, travelled abroad, came again to Oxford, and was offered a preferment in the Church in Ireland, which, greatly to his credit, he declined. "A man's affairs, and the whole course of his life," said he, "are not to be altered in a moment; and one *is not made fit for a calling, and that in a day.* . . . . It is not enough for such places [those of clergymen] to be *merely in orders;* and I cannot think that preferment of that nature should be thrown on a man who has never given any proof of himself, and has not even tried the pulpit."

In 1666—for in a work like the present it is impossible to pursue the biography of any great man further than a few dates—Locke became acquainted with Lord Ashley, afterwards the Earl of Shaftesbury; and between the philosopher, then a mere medical friend, and the nobleman there sprang up a great intimacy. Locke was received into Shaftesbury's house and heart, and became thereby intimate with John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, Lord Halifax, and other wits of the time; for in those degenerate days noblemen condescended to know something, and to patronise art and letters. When Shaftesbury received his earldom (Locke had educated his son, and afterwards his grandson, the philosophic Shaftesbury) and became Chancellor, he gave Locke a post under Government, which the philosopher only enjoyed one year, losing his place when his patron fell. In 1675, Locke's health induced him to visit France; and he resided in Holland after the death of his patron, finding it safer to be out of the way of his political enemies, the

friends of King James II. But in 1688 the fleet that brought William III. from Holland to England brought also the illustrious John Locke; and, great as was the king, it brought no richer gift. Locke had been known as a philosopher and as a prominent defender of civil and religious liberty; in Holland he had published a letter in Latin "On Toleration." This was immediately afterwards printed in French, Dutch, and English, and brought Locke much praise. In 1690 he published his most celebrated work, on which he had long been engaged in Holland, the "Essay on the Human Understanding;" in the same year two treatises on "Civil Government," being a defence of the revolution against the Tories; and his chief other works are (1693) "Thoughts concerning Education," (1695) the "Reasonableness of Christianity," (1696) "Two Vindications" of the last work, and after his death a work, perhaps his best, "On the Conduct of the Understanding."

Now the question for the self-improver is, how far he ought to read the writings of Locke, and whether they are suited to him; for a man may be very great in his day, and yet not much in ours. The effect that Locke's works had was very great; but then the resistance to his mild and easy doctrines was intense. It is difficult now to ascertain how any one could oppose some of his tenets; though it is certain that many of his doctrines were then looked upon as revolutionary, and that, studied as they were by Voltaire and the French philosophers, they produced enormous results on the Continent. "Educated," says Sir James Macintosh, "amongst English Dissenters, during the short period of their ascendancy, he imbibed the deep

piety and ardent political liberty of those men. . . . By the Independent divines, who were his instructors, he was taught those principles of religious liberty which they were the first to disclose to the world." And Locke had the merit of doing this in simple language, for he hated scholastic jargon, and never sought by artifice to strengthen his weaker thoughts, but clothed all in sinewy, simple English, so that everybody might read them. His "Essay on the Human Understanding," and his modest defence of our Holy Faith, with the slightly sarcastic title, a "Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity," are especially worth reading, even when people are busy, and when they may even think them dry. They are full of thought, and full, too, of the spirit of toleration and love for religious freedom. Mackintosh declares that no books have done more with the learned and the leading minds "to rectify prejudice, to undermine established errors, to diffuse a just mode of thinking, to excite a fearless spirit of inquiry, and yet to contain it *within the boundaries which Nature has prescribed to the human understanding.*" That is noble praise. There is yet nobler in its way: Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law Rhymer of our times, makes one of his working men enjoy his leisure by lying on a sofa and reading Locke and Plato. Of course the working man is a model working man; but it says much for him, and much for Locke, that his sober, excellent, thoughtful works should become the handbook of the intelligent toiler. "If," says a reviewer, "Locke made few discoveries, Socrates made none; yet both did more for the improvement of the understanding, and not less for the progress of knowledge, than the

ɔrs of the most brilliant discoveries." Locke died
e year 1704, at the age of seventy-two.
very different writer from Locke now claims our
ıtion—David Hume, a capital historian so far as
and outline of facts go, and a philosophical
:r of some acuteness and power, although opposed
ocke's principles of thinking, and most certainly
ıose which the writer would seek to advocate.
it is incumbent in literature to study fairly what
ıpponent says; and even in the literature of re-
n to welcome inquiry, and to stimulate the sharp-
and alertness of those who, by opposing, really
ɡ out into greater contrast the beauties of the truth.
(710 Dr. George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne,
4-1753,) one of the best men who ever lived, to
n Pope ascribed "every virtue under Heaven,"
ished a tract on the "Principles of Human Know-
ɛ," in which the ideal system was first promulgated,
h may be most clearly explained as that which
s everything around us to sensations or effects
uced on the brain by appearances, and not by
ɛies. Hence the saying that there was "no mat-
only form, embodied in Byron's lines,—

> When Berkeley said there was no matter,
> It was no matter what he said;

hence the somewhat vulgar refutation, though only
ɜe refutation after all, of Dr. Johnson, who kicked
ne, and said he had thus refuted Berkeley. But
ɛnsations proceed from the touch as well as the
, and as stone might be calcined, and pass off in
ɛe and impalpable ashes, and then would offer no
tance to a kick, although the matter would yet

remain in the world, the great dictionary Doctor had only touched the outer works of the Berkeleian citadel; and the theory of external appearances being all-powerful, and of there being "no nothing," no existent reality either in morals, in being, or in belief, spread, in spite of all contradiction. Now nothing could have been further from the excellent Bishop of Cloyne's intention than to favour scepticism and disbelief, for his was a life of practical Christianity. He spent his fortune in preaching that faith at home and abroad, and left London, preferment, friends, and comfort, to found a college for the conversion of the American Indians. He refused to remove from a poor see to a rich one, and by every act in his kind and good life, showed himself to be a simple, honest gentleman, and a true Christian; and yet this Berkeleian theory was destined to work mischief to the Faith!

The theory existed of course before George Berkeley propounded it. One of the chief mysteries of existence relates to matter: What is it? Whence comes it? Is it soluble? It is, as far as human knowledge can ascertain, indestructible; and so on. It is the true Proteus: it changes from form to form, from shape to shape. Hamlet's philosophical thought that "the noble dust of Alexander might be found stopping a bung-hole," is in the true Berkeleian spirit; only Shakespeare is so clear, so simple, that he discourses things of the deepest moment, and the very clowns of the ring understand him, while it may be so-called philosophers despise him. Here, then, is this wondrous Protean change of matter traced at once, "with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it:" As thus: "Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust;

: dust is earth; of earth we make loam: and why that loam whereto he was converted might not a er-barrel be stopped?

> Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
> O that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall to expel the Winter's flaw!

Super-subtly looked at, this constant change of form, en around us every day, from the budding hyacinth, hich grows up in a few weeks out of a dry bulb and a ass of water, to the oak which springs from an acorn, : the rust which eats away the polished steel, induced any intellects to regard matter as nothing. "Given haos to make a world," is the problem for modern onstructive philosophers; but those of the old Know-Nothing party bothered the cause like an Irish advo-ate, by declaring that in this world of shows there was o matter to begin with.

Hume's system of morality, then, is a very natural roduction of Berkeley's system of physics. In 1738 he ublished his "Treatise of Human Nature," in which ie leading theory seems to be, that all our know-:dge is derived from two branches of supply—impres-ons and ideas. As neither of these is very certain, ie philosopher contended that we must never hope to now much, whether we were right, or whether we ere wrong; and in short, as Robert Hall says, "by :rplexing the relations of cause and effect, he boldly med to introduce a universal scepticism, and to pour more than Egyptian darkness into the whole region morals."

This charge is perhaps too sudden and too severe. he *effect of Hume's* scepticism is unusually well de-

fined; but the intention of the well-dressed, learned comfortable, high-bred, and gentlemanly philosopher is perhaps exaggerated. It seems to the present writer that the intention of Hume was to lull the conscience to sleep; to make life "comfortable" by relieving it of its most pressing duties, and of its most intense and active faith. As we do not and cannot know whither we are going, is it not better to stand still? Such would be the natural reflection of the sceptic of Hume's way of thinking. "In drawing his metaphysical theories and distinctions Hume seems to have been unmoved," says a writer, "by any considerations of consequences." Philosophers generally are so. He saw that they would lead to universal scepticism, to doubts that would shake all inductive science to pieces, and would, in fact, if driven to their utmost bound, put a stop to the whole business of life. For what is a man to do when he doubts everything? "His theories led up," says another writer, "to the absurd contradiction in terms —a belief that there can be no belief," and he was content to wander in the maze of speculation and doubt. Yet he is not to be shunned. The true way to subvert Hume is to reason him right out and reason beyond him. He thought like many men—like Burns, for instance, that the goodness of actions depends upon their consequences; or, to put it in another way, "that the virtue of actions depends upon their utility;" and even in our own day he has a numerous class of followers who are to be treated with respect. Dr. Adam Smith ridiculed this doctrine humorously enough when he asked, "Have we no other reason for praising a man than that for which we should commend a chest of drawers?" But Hume's theory, so far as applied

and interpreted by Adam Smith, is exactly that
h is used in the Parable of the Talents,—"Thou
vest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather
re I have not strawed," and requiring of man espe-
y that he should be of use to his fellow-man. It is,
oubt, in great part true, and if construed with the
tional rule that man must ever be subject to an
r guidance, and refer to the Great Taskmaster,
Almighty, the highest system of morality will be
ined.

1742, Hume, who lived in elegant society, and
a well-born, warm-hearted, and very pleasant Scotch
eman, who seems to have lived to the delight of
elf and his friends, and to have set priests and
ons of all kinds, much to their anger and disgust,
very low value, published his "Essays, Moral,
ical, and Literary;" a volume often reprinted by
heological booksellers, and very amusing it is,
calculated for popular reading if read with care.
other works, which were not published till after his
a, are "An Inquiry concerning the Principles of
als," "The Natural History of Religion," and
alogues on Religion;" about which neither the
stian nor the sceptic need trouble himself very
a. There is a certain mysterious deadness in most
Christian treatises (and these, though well-dis-
ed, are so) that causes such works to become old-
oned in a very short time, and to die out more
lly than other works do. The reason is not far to
. The constant attacks on Christianity are pre-
iently similar in this, that they are obliged fre-
tly to shift their base of operations; the defenders
the *walls, and in* this Holy War soon answer or

expose their enemies. Then it is that a new le glittering in philosophical armour, comes forward, all sceptics flock to him : his name is exalted, his p is magnified, and the besieged city trembles. So Tol Tindal, Hume, Paine, and the French encyclopæ have died down, and the men who have filled t places in our own day will in their turn be forgo in a few years. But Hume's argument against mira is still of force, and is produced and re-produced, as infidelity was anticipated in the year thirty-and-t of the Christian ministry. Hume's theory, which se to us to be substantially the same as that of mo scientific sceptics, is this : that it is more probable the witnesses or reporters of what they conceive be a miracle should have been deceived than that laws of nature, which are unchangeable, should b terfered with. Let us boldly admit this, and remains? *Medea superest.* "Man," says Bacon, had himself put down in one book all the difficu of the Christian faith, and this amongst them, "i servant and interpreter of nature;" therefore we rely on the counter-argument of Dr. George Camp that "as we have equally to trust to human testi *for an account of those laws* as for a history of the t actions which are considered to be an exception them," the testimony on either side is equal, an objection *nil.*

Hume is, beyond his gentlemanly and easy sophy, an acute clear writer, worth reading, if read, and always to be honoured for the lustre he on literature, and the esteem in which he he "There is," he says, "speaking of the reign of Jan "such a superiority in the pursuits of literature

every other occupation, that even he who attains but mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions." The scholar and the student should honour Hume, if only for that proud sentence.

Chapter XXI.

THE BRITISH NOVELISTS.

LEAVING the serious and weighty write of whom we last talked, we come to important branch of literature—especial of modern literature—Novels and R mances.

These are often unfairly despised; but those wh despise them do not consider what immense effect th have on the happiness of mankind. It is possib philosophically to object to the *dictum* generally a signed to Jeremy Bentham, that it is the duty of Gover ment to assure "the greatest happiness of the greate number;" but, if we accept it (and as there are thc sands upon thousands by whom the principles of tr philosophy never can be understood—even if the wi few could agree upon those principles—we may as w do so), we must remember that novels, of a higher lower order, form the mental food of a large numb of male readers, and of an infinitely larger proporti of female readers. For them the romance, either three volumes, or in weekly or monthly numbers, f nishes not only mental nourishment and instructi

but mental excitement and pleasure. For them the only pictures of the great world that they behold outside the narrow circle of their homes, lie in romance. For them often, too often, all the nobility, beauty, and excellence of life exist in the pages of fiction. For them all the subtleties of politics, all the problems of existence and religion, all the visions of a more refined life than that of every day toil, all the suggestions of philosophy, and all the shows of fancy lie between the thin boards of the circulating library novel, or the still thinner weekly sheet which they buy of the neighbouring newsman. To a great extent, therefore, the mental health of these people is in the custody of the novelist. Hence the importance of his work is not easily overrated. If imagination and fancy are not among the highest gifts of God, they are certainly among his good ones; so that that which will always captivate the young, the fanciful and the imaginative part of mankind, at the period of their greatest activity, is indeed of the highest importance. In the serial publications of our day to every reader of a serious essay, however lightly touched or amusingly written, we have probably three or four who devote themselves to the tales, and who think prose, unless it be in the shape of dialogue or narration, dull indeed.

But while the novels are amusing, they are educating and forming the minds of the readers; and in this there is no reason to despair, or to take a gloomy view of humanity, because we have fallen on a busy and sensational age. Under every circumstance the writer feels himself to be a teacher; and however degraded he may be by continual practice, by the bare hope of mere gain or the love *of money,* he is still precluded by his in-

stinct, by the generosity of man's heart, and, mo
all, by the guidance of Providence, from writin
which is palpably corrupt and corrupting. In
nine tales and novels out of every hundred, vi
made triumphant and vice is discomfited. The
may be neither a philosopher nor a religionist, b
writer—if but to please his readers—feels that he
invest his chief characters with all that is noble i
and woman—liberality, generosity, honesty,
modesty, bravery, courage of mind, agility and str
of body, wisdom, firmness, and endurance. "
pose," wrote Thackeray, himself a great novelis
long as novels last and authors aim at interesting
public, there must always be in the story a virtuou
gallant hero, a wicked monster his opposite,
pretty girl who finds a champion. Bravery and
conquer beauty; and vice, after seeming to tri
after a certain number of pages is sure to be discor
in the last volume, when justice overtakes him
honest folks come by their own." Bearing t
mind we may the more readily affirm that eve
light literature of our age and country—taken
whole—is not pernicious in its effects. The
mind, as well as the idle hand, is in danger o
Certainly some minds might be better employed
in that which a wise man said was the greatest
ment of life—reading new and interesting novels
we may at least comfort ourselves with the fac
they might find a very much worse amusement.

It is not necessary to send the beginner bac
very early age, and the old Greek and Latin rom
of Longinus, Apuleius, and others, may be dism
without apology. Romantic histories, arising fro

middle ages, and based partly upon the stories of classical mythology, and the rich stories of early Eastern literature, during the period of the Crusades, are the origin of our modern romances. "The late editor of Warton," says Hallam, "is of opinion that 'the reverence and adoration of the female sex which has descended to our own times, is the offspring of the Christian dispensation.' But until it can be shown that Christianity establishes any such principle, we must look a little further down for its origin." The fact is that woman in Holy Writ, has not assigned to her the position which she now holds: "the silent growth of female ascendancy" has been promoted by the language of romance; the sympathy of mankind has been won towards gentleness, sweetness, and success in love; and the old romances were built upon three columns (now, like the leaning tower of Pisa, a little out of the perpendicular), "chivalry, gallantry, and religion." Upon these, Hallam ("Hist. Lit. Europe," i., p. 133) wisely remarks, "repose the fictions of the middle ages, especially those usually designated as romances."

These romances were long, and to a modern mind, almost interminable; they were originally metrical,[1] and were chiefly written by natives of the North of France. The English and Germans translated them, and in good time learned men, enchanted by the beauty of sentiment, or the sad, touching, and poetic episodes in these old stories, began to imitate them. Some of these stories were short moral tales, with a moral "tag" or ending placed at the conclusion, such as the "Gesta

[1] "The oldest prose romance, which is also partly metrical, appears to be 'Tristan de Leonois, one of the Cycle of the Round Table,' written or translated by Lucas de Gast, about 1170."—*Hallam.*

Romanorum" (from which Shakespeare and our older dramatists took many of their plots), in which the weighty teachings of the Biblical parables, and the method of bringing the story home to the conscience of the reader, were imitated. Then came the more laboured histories of the various Christian heroes and knights, such as Amadis de Gaul, over which Cervantes makes his hero Don Quixote lose his head. A beautiful if somewhat tedious romance, abounding in the choicest diction and most elevated thoughts,—the "Arcadia" of our own Sir Philip Sidney, marks a fresh era in this species of writing. In this, something of the modern method is blended with the antique guise of the story, and the prose is intermixed with some choice poetry. It is true that the hero is of the most exalted bravery, beauty, strength, and prowess, and that the heroine excels all possible princesses and women in loveliness, truth, tenderness, and nobility of soul; but now and then there are to be found well-reasoned disputations, elegantly worded dialogues, attempts at sketches of character, and even comic and amusing episodes.

After this, in literature, romance nearly fades out. The art of the monkish transcriber is lost; that of the printer has not arrived at any thing like the necessary rapidity of production; so the stage has grown up and under Shakespeare and the great and glorious company of poets which flourished in the age of Elizabeth, it has reached such a pitch of strength and splendour that it commands at once the best poetic invention, and the grandest, most melodious, and most philosophic diction of any age or time. Episodes, scenes, words, and phrases there are, which—owing to changes

our modes of expression—are unfitted for the modern ar; but there is not a shadow of a doubt that out of ie plays of Shakespeare and his great contemporaries ere could be made such a commonplace-book of regious, moral, philosophic, and wise sentences and assages, as could not be matched, though the comiler were to gather from all the books in the world, ve the Bible. In elevation, breadth, tenderness, pity -in fact, in true charity—they are not to be equalled, uch less surpassed.

Eclipsed by the splendour of dramatic literature, the etic romance faded, as we have said, out of the heme of civilization. But, tired of elevation, and rrupted by the influence of France and the Court, e romantic drama fell off, and gave place, as we -ve seen, to the licentious comedies of Congreve and s fellows in the age of Charles II. Hence, many of e more serious people, even if worldly and unpuritical, remained at home, rather than witness the imrities of the stage; meanwhile a new species of literry home amusement had been growing up. It is rious, perhaps, that we should owe this, too, to the fluence or the example of French literature. Scarron, e ugly husband of the handsomest and most powerl woman in France, Madame de Maintenon, had itated the "Grand Cyrus" by a burlesque story, e "Roman Comique," and other writers followed his eps, in which the love adventures and stories of the rench Court, highly coloured, were told under disised names. It is not much to the honour of women at we record that Mrs. Aphra Behn (d. 1689), an nglish spy, residing abroad, introduced into England rtain novels *after the* French fashion, mingling much

of the personal gossip of Scarron, with the licer
ness of Bussy Rabutin. These "novels" are
after the Spanish *novellas*, light, sparkling tale
adventures, than our present laborious works
and resemble the little episodical narratives
present magazines in everything but their mor
dency. Pope truly remarked of Mrs. Behn, und
name of Astræa, that her comedies were only
noted for their licentiousness.

Happily this immorality had not any wit, nor
invention to keep it alive; it is now fairly de
though an odd volume of Mrs. Behn's works tu
now and then on a bookseller's stall. Mrs. M
another hard-working lady author, fairly ran Mrs
neck-and-neck in the race for impropriety; an
probably to them and to other pens wielded by w
that we owe, as much as to any other cause, the
rooted antipathy to works of fiction which has s
and so steadily distinguished the English middle
It is worthy of remark, as illustrating the man
the age, that these two ladies found an excellent
for their wares, and that their novels, full of i
and debauchery as they are, were read, even
family circle, while the ladies worked. Sir
Scott's grandmother once feeling arise within h
mory some remembrance of an old story, begge
to get her one of those tales which were so p
and so pleasurable in her youth. Blushing
read, Sir Walter passed as lightly as he could
few pages, when the old lady indignantly told
"Tak' awa' yer bonnie buik," remarking at th
time how differently society was then constitut
is certain that the habits and thoughts of Engl

and Englishwomen a century and a half since were so different from those of the present generation, that what would now shock us, did not then offend even female delicacy.

Arising from such a cloud of foolish flies as were these women novelists and their imitators, who are only here mentioned for the purpose of presenting the excellences of better writers in their true light, we now come to Daniel Defoe (or Foe, for, like Beranger, he added the De) who lived a troubled life from 1664 to 1731, working honestly as a tradesman, a speculator, and improver of English manufactures; then as a journalist, when his wages were poverty, contempt, abuse, neglect, and imprisonment; afterwards as a novelist, politician, poet, and theologian; an earnest man, excellent as a citizen, a husband, and a father, and notably one of those unknown martyrs who never gain the palm of the hero, nor wear the golden nimbus of the saint. An old Scotch theologian, when dying, said that he had worn himself out "in work which God had not required of him, and for which man would not thank him." This, which may be said of many quick, restless, and inventive geniuses, who do too much, cannot be said of Defoe. Man has indeed to thank him for his "Robinson Crusoe," the delight of everybody, the wonder of every student, full as it is of true moral lessons of manly wisdom and sound piety, written in pure and simple English, intelligible even to children; nor should the history of "Colonel Jaque," "The Adventures of Captain Singleton," the "Journal of the Plague Year," and one or two other works of this great master, be omitted from the list of books especially worthy to be read. The fertility of Defoe was

enormous, and his industry was equal to it. No man, though his works have become a "rage" with collectors, has ever gathered a complete library of them, although he may have spent a life in collecting them.

> His was a various pen, that freely roved
> Into all subjects, was in most approved:
> Whate'er the theme, his ready muse obey'd—
> Love, courtship, politics, religion, trade;
> Gifted alike to shine in every sphere,—
> Nov'list, historian, poet, pamphleteer.

In his day the Church of England was a persecutin[illegible] Church, and the great battle of religious freedom ha[illegible] to be fought. It is not too much to say that few me[illegible] scarcely perhaps one, by pamphlets, poetry, ("T[illegible] True-born Englishman" has some very vigorous lin[illegible]s and satire did more than Defoe to free and better t[illegible] condition of his fellow-dissenters. Unfortunately, [illegible] is satire was mistaken, and he offended both parties, [illegible]e Tories and the Whigs, was put in the pillory, had [illegible]is ears cropped, and was otherwise maltreated. B[illegible]t, shorn of his ears, he wore a magnificently flowing w[illegible]g. He was not defeated; ruined in his estate, he was n[illegible]er bankrupt in spirit; and he merits, but in its most fa- vourable sense, the full meaning of the participle [illegible]p- plied so contemptuously by Pope—

> Earless on high stood *unabash'd* Defoe.

He was "unabashed" till the death of his hero, K[illegible]ng William III., the increase of age, and the misc[illegible]on- duct of his children, brought him to his grave. T[illegible]he Non-conformists are sometimes wrongly regarded a[illegible]s a body wanting in enthusiasm; but they have two bra[illegible]ve, *noble* men, confessors and martyrs, whose lives, if [illegible]ro- *perly* known, would excite an admiration equal in its

intensity to that felt for any saint in the Romish Calendar: these men are Defoe and Bunyan. Another admirable quality in Defoe is his unaffected piety, his constant acknowledgment of the power and goodness of God; but that which distinguishes him above all other writers is his wonderful minuteness and reality in description. In the island of Crusoe the reader feels in spite of himself that what he reads is true. Each scene is as plainly described and as minutely pictured as if the writer had set down all that he saw in the catalogue. This gift, which Defoe possessed more than any other writer of his class, is so strong, that the fictitious "History of the Plague" was for years quoted as the authoritative narrative of a personal witness; and his "Memoirs of a Cavalier" has been cited by a grave historian as historic truth.

Samuel Richardson is a novelist who must not be omitted from the list of the worthies who have adorned our English literature. It is not often that an actor writes a good play, or that a bookseller and publisher becomes a capable author. There are, however, a few notable exceptions to the first—Shakespeare, Macklin, and others—and to the second in Richardson, who, apprenticed to a printer, rose to be the master of the Stationers' Company. A "womanly" man, of strict probity, and of a prosperous industry, he seemed, in his youth, even while a Blue-coat-boy, capable of inspiring a certain confidence in the fair sex, which was then not so well educated as it is now. Richardson, to this quality of inspiring trust, owes his fame. His fair young friends asked him to write their love-letters, and his retentive memory retained their method and phrases. Hence (*he was above* fifty) when certain publishers,

anxious to secure a book which should cost them little and produce them much, asked the vain Master Stationer to pen them a volume of model letters for the various concerns in life; he complied, and the letters insensibly grew into the novel of "Pamela," which the author, with a glance of virtuous indignation at the stories of the day, hoped "would turn his young readers into a course of reading very different from the pomp and parade of romance writing." What Richardson meant by the "pomp and parade," unless he glanced at the "Arcadia" and the "Grand Cyrus,"—the former of which was then little read—one can hardly say; but his novel was an immense success, and it deserved it. It ran through five editions in the year it was published (1741). It became the rage of the town. Ladies had Pamela hats and Pamela fans, and in the park and opera held the book up in triumph to each other, to show that they had it. Pope praised it as likely to do more good than twenty sermons, and Dr. Sherlock lauded it from the pulpit.

Now, when we read it, we find it dry, full of long disquisitions, some descriptions out of place in a book for ladies, and a certain dull pomposity; "but we must remember," says Sir Walter Scott, "that it in some degree requires a reader to be acquainted with the huge folios of inanity over which our ancestors must have yawned themselves to sleep before we can appreciate the delight which they experienced at this unexpected return to nature and truth." In 1748 Richardson's second and greatest work, the memoirs of Clarissa, since known as "Clarissa Harlowe," appeared, and in 1753 his "Sir Charles Grandison," designed to represent the "beau ideal of a Christian and a gentleman."

All Richardson's novels were wonderfully and de-

rvedly successful; and after a century, "Clarissa arlowe" was resuscitated in Paris, to the immense lmiration of the French, whose taste for "sentiment" ıused them to over-rate its real worth. Written in his :tle back shop in the intervals of business, these works ·e yet to be regarded as coming from the heart; and ıey are unquestionably works of genius. "Clarissa" said to be "one of the noblest tributes ever paid to :male virtue and honour:" and it was paid by one ·ho knew the sex well, and was himself in heart and rain almost a woman. But it is impossible to account ›r the gift of genius. Here is an old stationer, fat, ·ell to do, loving money and good living, vain as a ·acock, worried to death by small critics who con-nually gave him dyspepsia and agonies of indigestion, nd only soothed by the highly spiced flattery and the ›iteful reprisals on his enemies of a circle of foolish :male friends; here is, to all appearance, one of the ıost unfit men in the world, who, after making money ll he is fifty, is led by the paltry ambition of making ore, to write a work which turns out to be utterly fferent from his first intention, and to prove the ıthor a great moralist, who has the most intimate :quaintance with the human heart, its passions, foibles, rength, and virtues; who can describe almost as mi-ıtely as Defoe; who can teach while he amuses, and ıstruct the heart in virtue while he drives away the lmiration for vice; who is powerful, tragic, pathetic, nd eminently original; and whose art is so great that is readers follow their enchanter through eight long olumes, heaving a sigh of regret when they lay them own; while the student of morality pronounces them o have been a benefit to the human race.

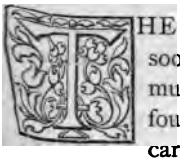
In our next chapter I shall glance, not always in

strict chronological order, at greater and more powerful writers—Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, &c.—but scarcely at so singular an example of genius as that presented by Samuel Richardson. The attention of the student of this branch of literature may here be called to two foreign novels that every Englishman should be familiar with, if he would understand the numerous allusions to them that he will meet in his course of reading. I refer to Cervantes' "Don Quixote" and Lesage's "Gil Blas." The first should be read in Shelton's quaint and lively version (1612-20). Smollett's translation of the latter work is the best yet given to the world.

Chapter XXII.

THE BRITISH NOVELISTS.

(*Continued.*)



HE British Novelist, as was but natural, soon got into his head a notion that he must be a moral teacher. We have found Samuel Richardson commencing a career of positive improvement by offering to afford the readers of his day a *pabulum*, or mental food, totally superior to anything that had gone before it; and it must be owned that Richardson was very moral if very slow. He had, however, (and it must always be the unfortunate duty of the novelist, or of the truthful narrator of any kind,) to portray a considerable deal of vice; for virtue is not virtue unless tried. Hence his Pamela, his virtuous heroine, is continually persecuted by the attentions of her master, Mr. Booth, and has many traps laid for her by her companion, Mrs. Jeukes, an odious woman, drawn with great force and knowledge of human nature; and these scenes, the better they were drawn, became, in the eyes of many, the worse; for instead of believing that *pictures of vice* must disgust, certain persons seem

think that they must allure; nay, from the false ea that innocence and ignorance are the same, they y to shut away from the young any knowledge of vil, and having "purified" Shakespeare, purify also he Bible, for *family reading*.

This is a mistake. The Holy Spirit himself has told us, in a truth as mighty as a whirlwind, as unshaken and firm as a chain of mountains, that "the kingdom of God is within us." There is another truth, its parallel, equally valuable, which He has left for man to find out,—it is this: the kingdom of the devil is also within us. We cannot be good by pretending not to know evil. When women go mad, the most innocent, the youngest, the most purely educated often utter the most horrid and obscene language; a proof that to them such evil has been known; how acquired, how taught, it is in vain to ask. What the teacher ought to seek is, not to blot out and veil iniquity, since that will always be visible, but to make the heart strong enough to cast out the evil, first into the herd of swine, then into the sea, which shall swallow it for ever.

Richardson, Defoe, Bunyan—in his splendid re- ligious novel—have been obliged, by the truth tha was in them, to picture evil; and they have show (the last two less than the first) that vice has often very gay and beautiful exterior; and, while they i culcate a love of virtue, they have insensibly taught knowledge of the world. In Defoe's marvellous min works, in "Roxana," "The Fortunes and Misfortu of Moll Flanders," in "Colonel Jack," and a few others, he has constantly shown what a bad bargain vice is, and that, if a man sups with the devil, he must eat

)udding. Defoe has done this with an unerring
:t, and has painted everything as plainly, and
wickedness as hideous, as does Hogarth in his
pictures. All these men, and it is something to
God for—who were so great and pleasant in
;enius, who were to be universally read, and to
uch an effect on their fellows, were moralists in
hearts. They are continually preaching the
' of goodness: they can never show virtue, or
or sweetness of nature, in a sufficiently charm-
ht. They picture vice, meanness, folly, as ever
: losing side. They make even fortune and the
bow down to goodness, and crown it with suc-
nay, one of them pierces beyond the clouds
hide futurity, and, passing "through the valley
shadow of death" with his hero, in a passage
npled for its tenderness and beauty, carries him,
nded by a company of "shining ones," into the
ce of his Creator, and takes the crown of gold
he hands of God himself, to place it on the head
constant and triumphant hero.

: eyes of the world at large seem, however, early
/e been shut against the novelist, and not to
een how well, in a dramatic sense, he also was
God's work. The Churches of every sect were
t him, as against his co-worker the playwright,
e won his way step by step, and but slowly.
ictures of vice, necessary to his art, were con-
:d; reading was pronounced to be idleness,
nce declared to be innocence; and the plain,
ry teaching, and forcible and direct manner of
rly masters were soon overdone, and grew out of
ı. The Philistine of that day wanted as much

sweetness and light as he does to-day, and even objected to Bunyan's "Pilgrim." In his rough and vigorous verse—and the peculiar value of *that* has never been properly brought out—the great author notices this prejudice. His second book thus speaks to him,—

> But some love not the method of your first:
> Romance, they count it; throw't away as dust.
> If I should meet with such, what should I say?
> Must I slight them as they slight me, or nay?

Bunyan answers his book:—

> My Christiana, if with such thou meet,
> By all means in all loving wise them greet.
> Render them not reviling for revile;
> But if they frown, I prythee on them smile.

Others turned this Christian smile into satire: hence rose a more polished, acute, and subtle kind of novel, which, while it teaches moral lessons of the highest value, amuses by its variety of incident, its merriment, and quickness of style, its apparent philosophy, and its caustic wit.

The great master of satirical romance, Henry Fielding, is in many respects the greatest novelist we have ever had. Thoroughly well educated, according to the times he lived in, he had that observation and wisdom which mere education can never give; and which make the finest scholars—mere scholars—but dwarfs and parrots, in comparison with the original genius; for men who are merely learned are but the indexes of the original thinker; indexes, moreover, not always to be trusted.

Henry Fielding, who was born in 1707, was the son of Lieutenant-general Fielding, and of the family

Earls of Denbigh. He was educated at Eton, and wards lived beyond his means; and this is the to his character. His father allowed him when was young £300 a-year; but they, said his son, at pay this who liked. He however got £1,500 his wife, which he spent as if it were an annual ment, feasting all the squires, and living like a tleman. In three years he was again penniless; wonder is that he made the money last so long. a young Templar he subsisted on writing plays; so gaily as ever he went back to that employment, es- ished one or two critical papers, and in 1742 he duced "Joseph Andrews," a mock heroic novel, ten to satirize the "Pamela" of Richardson. The er, it was said, had "made the passions move at the mand of virtue;" and it was noticeable that all his ies were paragons of virtue, while all his gentlemen e more or less villanous. Fielding reversed the n: his Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop are but frail rtals, and Pamela is but a very ordinary creature en married, while Parson Adams and Joseph An- ws are as virtuous as they are true. Besides this, novel contained a number of introductory essays l reflections as delightful as they are wise and deep; ile such dry and good humour, such a knowledge character, so gentle a pencil had never before been rcised by a painter of manners. The works next rotation are capital, but are not now popularly read; y are "A Journey from this World to the Next," l the "History of Jonathan Wild the Great." In latter he makes a brutal thief-catcher and dealer blood-money his hero, satirically to lecture the rld on its preference for soldiers, conquerors, and

those who are eminent by brute force. Per
more trenchant satire was never written. It is
cutting and too strong for the Philistines of t
sent day; and yet every word of it is true.

As Fielding was a barrister and a genius, the
ters of the Hanoverian race who rule this cou
who afterwards, with equal propriety, made the s
of Scottish poets a whisky-gauger—made him
Street magistrate, one of those who were then p
their judgments by certain fees wrung from tho
appeared before them. They were popularly
as trading justices; and as Fielding did not st
do as did his brothers, he only realized from
pointment £300 a-year of what he called the
money upon earth. But he was an excellent
and did good service; so much so, that, for a w
the Government intrusted him with £600 to e
highwaymen, which he did very effectually.
midst of all this labour he produced "Tom
perhaps the finest novel in the English langu
which the publisher gave him the large sum of
and, on its immense success, £100 more.
generosity on the part of a publisher deserve
recorded. In 1751 appeared his second great
"Amelia," which shares with Burton's "Anaton
honour of keeping Dr. Johnson awake all n
read it; and in 1754 the author, worn out with
and, it may be, with early dissipation, so far as
wine, left England for Lisbon, where he died
was a joyous nature, but not a happy life. H
whom he tenderly loved,—and whose portrait a
we fancy, both as Sophia and as Amelia, two he
two gentle English ladies, the sweetness of who

that of our native wild hedge-roses, is so pure and healthful, that there is none other to compare with it, ——died while the author was in the midst of his struggles, leaving him but her memory and a perpetual regret. His health broke down under constant mental labour and anxiety, and his last work, "A Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon," written, no doubt, for the booksellers, is one of the saddest records in the English language. He sailed for Lisbon on June 30th, 1754, and he died and was buried there in October in the same year.

It has been said that, to read one of Fielding's natural stories after one of Richardson's, is like walking on a breezy heath after having been shut up in a sick-room. All sorts of fine things have been said of the former author. "He is," said Byron, "the prose prose Homer of Human Nature." "No one now-a-days," said Thackeray, "dare write of men as truly as Fielding wrote." Hence "Tom Jones" is not a novel which women generally read. It reveals too much of the follies, the vices, and the wickedness of men. Fielding paints his heroes from the life: they are redolent not only of the tobacco-pipe and the smell of punch, but they give hints, not to be misunderstood, of the libertinage of man. "Oh Sophia," says Tom Jones, "the purity of your sex cannot comprehend the baseness of ours;" and that is the key-note of the work. Yet Fielding never palliates vice, and never tries to conceal it. As a picture of the manners of the day, more *openly* corrupt than they are at present, yet perhaps only different in that respect, the work is exquisite. "As a work of construction," wrote Thackeray, "it is quite *a wonder.* The by-play of wisdom the power

of observation, the multiplied felicitous turns and thoughts, the varied character of the great comic epic, keep the reader in a perpetual admiration and curiosity" ("English Humorists," p. 275). "A single laugh from Tom Jones," said Lamb, "clears the air." But, more than this, while reading the book, howsoever much you may dislike the hero, you cannot but admire the genius, vigour, intelligence, and real goodness of the author. He is always a man, always a gentleman. What vast sympathy! what a cheerfulness! what a manly relish of life! what a love of human kind! what a poet is here!—watching, meditating, brooding, creating! What multitudes of truths has that man left behind him! What scholars he has formed and accustomed to the exercise of thoughtful humour and the manly play of wit!" There, indeed, is the secret of his greatness. Larger praise yet remains behind. Fielding's works are essentially books for men, and for manly men. He scorns folly and roguery. "His wit is wonderfully wise and delectable: it flashes upon a rogue, and lightens up a rascal like a policeman's lantern." Above all, he was no snob. He told the Earl of Denbigh that his branch of the family spelt the name *Fi*elding, and not *Fe*elding, because it had learned to spell first. He refused as a magistrate to accept the accustomed fees, and to take the shillings of poor suitors. He had an honest enmity to all that was base and untrue; and in the midst of sin a clear Christian faith. "Our immortal Field-

" Gibbon wrote, "was of the younger branch of Earls of Denbigh, who drew their origin from the ıts of Hapsburgh. The successors of Charles V. · disdain their brethren of England; but the ro-

:e of 'Tom Jones,' that exquisite picture of humanners, will outlive the palace of the Escurial he Imperial Eagle of Austria."

ıollett, his brother novelist, was a Scotsman, also od family, but poor. He was born in 1721, edu- at Dumbarton School and Glasgow, came to on as a surgeon, served on board ship as sur- s mate at Carthagena, 1741, left the service— ı bad and tyrannical one—lived for some time in ca, and returned to London in 1746. In 1748 oduced his successful and most admired novel, lerick Random," avowedly written in imitation sage's "Gil Blas." In 1751 he published "Peri- Pickle;" in 1753, "Adventures of Ferdinand : Fathom;" in 1755, a version of "Don Quixote;" ;6 he began the "Critical Review;" in 1758 pub- his "History of England;" in 1763-6 his "Tra- and in 1769 "Adventures of an Atom." In he died at Leghorn, in the fifty-first year of his 'orn out with work. We have not here spoken poems or his tragedies, since they may well be ten.

at is worthy in Smollett is his fun, drollery, know- of human nature, and his pictures of life of the and especially his portraits, drawn from the life : sailors of that day. "He went up to London ıt his way," says a writer, "armed with courage, r, and keen wits. Yet you see somehow that he :ntleman through all his battling and struggling, overty, his hard-fought successes, and his de-

But he is a gentleman of not a very delicate :: his heroes are rakes, and Scotch rakes, too, of them with hardly an iota of goodness, except

jollity, merriment, and bold, brave hearts. His n
are relations of events many of which probably
pened to the author, told straight on, without
and without much skill in construction. Yet th
tility of invention is such that the reader is never t
and the fun and drollery, the positive hearty lau
and humour, in them, are more plentiful than was
seen before, or perhaps since. In "The Expe
of Humphrey Clinker" (published after his deat
three volumes, 1771) there is great invention of
racter: indeed one of his novels will tell the r
more of the manners and people of the day th
dozen histories. Yet no one would advise ladi
read these novels. Men may read them; bu
coarseness of Smollett's language is occasional
volting to a sensitive mind.

Of a very different calibre as an artist was Lau
Sterne; an author who holds a place in English
ture which is quite unique, in the proper ser
that unpleasant and misused word. Sterne, as
body knows, was a clergyman, the "Reverend"
rence Sterne. There is no one else at all like
no one can boast of precisely the same genius, hu
fancy, delicacy of touch, invention, and imagin
It says much for "blood" that these three gre
morists, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne, should
men of old families. It says much also for the
necessity which poverty induces that all were
Perhaps Sterne's father was the poorest. The c
of a marching regiment, he was the scion of
Suffolk family, the crest of which was the famou
ling. He dragged poor Mrs. Sterne and his
after him; and his celebrated son was born wh

regiment was at Clonmel, in Ireland, in 1713, and for the first ten years of his life followed his father in the baggage waggons of the regiment. Here we may dismiss Sterne *père*—an irascible, brave little man, kind-hearted, and perchance like Uncle Toby. He was run through the body at Gibraltar, his son has told us, by a brother officer; the cause of the duel being appropriately a goose!

It was perhaps as well for Laurence that his father made his exit at the time he did. Richard Sterne had been Archbishop of York in James the Second's time, and lived at Elvington; and Sterne's cousin, the squire of that place, sent him to Jesus College, Cambridge, whence he took orders, and got the living of Sutton, and the prebendary of York. His wife married him for love, she having, as she told him when about (as she thought) to die, left him every shilling of her fortune; but Sterne's love did not last as did that of Fielding. Wife and husband got heartily tired of each other. Our author, when he became celebrated, fell in love with another woman, Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, the "Eliza" of his letters. He published his celebrated "Tristram Shandy," his "Sermons," his "Sentimental Journey." He became the rage of the town, danced attendance on the great, travelled abroad, and died in Bond Street, with only an old woman by him, who robbed his body of the gold sleeve-links of his shirt. When he died he left behind him the reputation of a first-rate and most original genius, second to none in his peculiar walk; and he was considered a man with a sentimental humour, but a bad heart. Perhaps some day Sterne's character will be successfully white-washed. As it is, we cannot resist the conviction forced on us that certain

geniuses are very unpleasant people, full, pe
cessarily so, of thoughts only regarding th
careless and often cruel to others, sensitive t
themselves, forgetful of the feelings of their fri
that great talents are a snare, that wit has a c
influence, which only true piety, combined w
courage and humility can negative and throw
the succeeding chapter somewhat will be s
Sterne's works.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BRITISH NOVELISTS.

(*Continued.*)

UT he to whom belongs the finest spirit of whim among all our writers is the immortal author of the 'Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy.'" Thus Professor Craik begins his short and insufficient ıt of the works of a great man who holds in En- iterature a place utterly different from any other

Sterne's time of writing extended only over nine his first work being published in 1759, and his is "Sentimental Journey," in 1768, the year of ath; and during that time he had risen suddenly position of an English classic; not because of the ıt that he had written, but from the careful finish, ginal invention, the humour, the real interest, and re idiomatic English in which everything he wrote othed.

great work is, of course, "Tristram Shandy," is prefaced by the words, "The Life and Opinions ıd truly, although purposely abrupt, interrupted, ı in jerks, full of digressions, anecdotes, sermons,

travels, sketches of things irrelevant to the story, and being itself a story which does not end, and leads nowhere, it is indeed the "Life and Opinions" of a man more thoroughly than any story ever written since. All the characters, simple English folk, unattended by a particle of the vile, sensational plot which the dwarfs of our literature strut about in, are as much alive as any of Shakespeare's; a great deal more alive than any character ever drawn by an historian, unless we go to Plutarch. Every figure is harmoniously placed and exquisitely finished: the humorous and eccentric father of the hero, with his Shandean philosophy about names; the captain, Mr. Shandy's brother; Corporal Trim, and Widow Wadham; Yorick; the dying Lieutenant Lefevre; Dr. Slop; Mrs. Bridget and Obadiah; nay, the very smallest sketch is gifted with the charm of life in a few words, as is the fat and foolish scullion who cries when Corporal Trim lets his hat fall. In the "Sentimental Journey" we find less broad humour, but there is the same finish,—the same clear, powerful, able brain, and (although it is treason to say so) tender heart, which can suggest the deepest thoughts and the tenderest images; so full of true pathos that, after a long acquaintance, they will not fail to draw tears. Sterne has a sweet pathos and humanity that has won for him the admiration of France in a fuller and more complete way than for any other English writer; and, in truth, his humour is very much after the manner of Rabelais, equal in grotesqueness and wit, and free, though not wholly so, from the daring balderdash, nonsense, madness, profanity, and dirt which the great *French* wit scattered over his pages. "Great wits *jump*," is a proverb, repeated by Sterne himself an-

any others. Yes, they do, and oftentimes, into foul itches and dunghills, whence they come out wofully oiled. Rabelais is banished to the top shelves of our braries on this account. Sterne must follow him, but ot without a sigh that he cannot be printed pure of uestionable matter for the use of the ladies. No one ould so soon touch them. His pathos is of a higher aracter, and more subtle than that of Dickens; and is because he was able to make the heart go beyond e bounds of our humanity, and weep over the life of dead ass, or the cry of an imprisoned starling,—"I n't get out,"—that the cuckoo cry that he had a bad art has gone the round of the schools. Before we ndemn him we must know more of Laurence Sterne. is "Letters," published after his death, will help to acidate his character. He who could make others el so deeply must have felt himself. "No one lives," id Sir Egerton Brydges, "who has pure and noble oughts, but is pure and noble at the time he utters em, at least." This must be true of Sterne. A ergyman, even in those days of lax priests and lazy shops, must have read his Bible; and Sterne had ad it so well that its language modelled and mellowed s own. His prose is about as far from verse as any ose can be; but it has a lofty, melodious cadence, hich is very charming. Hence, passages of his have ten been quoted as from the Bible, and one sentence, erhaps, seventy people out of every hundred believe be in Proverbs or the Prophets, "God tempers the ind to the shorn lamb," is surely worthy of the Golden eacher himself.

Oliver Goldsmith is another writer who has won for imself a very high position in foreign as well as Eng-

lish literature. He was a native of Ireland, and ha all the carelessness, the genius, the warmth and honest which are peculiar to his people; and he is one wh does them especial honour. He is an author, to who has done honour to authorship, and who, poc reckless, indebted, hardly able to face his credito simple as a child, helpless and dependent on his frien for knowledge of the world, was yet a noble man, who life in many of its particulars, does honour to our cc mon humanity. Born in 1728, he was an obsc worker for the booksellers in London until his frie Dr. Johnson almost forced a worthy publisher to for sixty pounds a work which was worth at least many hundreds—the "Vicar of Wakefield." Even th (so much for the far-sightedness of publishers!), th careful soul kept it five years, not issuing it until 176 when Goldsmith had already gained fame by his poems The "Vicar of Wakefield" is one of the most popula books in the world, and has the merit of being the firs of our genuine domestic novels. Yet the character are simple, true, non-heroic, and every-day peopl thoroughly English; and the story is constructed in careless, blundering fashion—mysteries which ever body sees, haunt the family, troubles which anyboc could avoid, ruin them, and a man universally know acts as a disguised friend, while the very vicar is r longer a vicar after the third chapter. Wonderful, to are the bulls in the book. The vicar is surprised ar confounded at old Wilmot not taking his part in t Whistonian theory of one wife only being lawful, we knowing at the time that he was courting his *fourth* w In another chapter, as Professor Craik points out, Gc *smith*, who was a true poet, writes—

The dew, the blossoms on the tree,
With charms *inconstant* shine;
Their charms were his, but, woe to me,
Their *constancy* was mine.

Yet, with all its errors, it is a very lovely story. "There are a hundred faults in this thing," wrote the author; "but a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties." This is very true. Somebody called Goldsmith "an inspired idiot," on account of his foolish talk; another said that he was—

For shortness call'd Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talk'd like poor Poll.

And there was no doubt cause for these epigrams; but in spite of fault and folly, there is wisdom in the book—sound thoughts on morals, government, and political economy, which will yet bear fruit. By more than half a century Goldsmith anticipated our prison reforms; and by how many more years has he anticipated a dozen more necessary reforms in society? Moreover, the book is full of humour, and healthy humour too. It is a good book, not a "goody" book. It does not make us sick with virtue, nor indignant at the selfish and speculative foresight of a hero who would purchase Heaven by an ostentatious gift of half-a-crown. It has none of the dull and tiresome quack religion of some of the tracts; and yet it is full of gospel feeling, and replete with the charity of a heart full of the grand narrative of the Glad Tidings. There is in the book this, which makes, says a critic, "all its faults comparatively of little consequence—the inspiration and vital power of original genius, the charm of true feeling, some portion of the music of the great hymn of Nature *made audible* in all hearts."

There is a good deal of Irish-Englishness in the story. The simplicity which unites with it so much cunning that in deceiving others it gets deceived itself, is illustrated in Moses and his gross of green spectacles, and breaks out in a thousand touches given by the artist. Never was there so rich a mine for painters as this graphic and lifelike story affords. Every incident has been illustrated over and over again; and had Goldsmith lived to the age of Jenkins or Parr, and been a millionnaire, he could have filled a huge gallery with miles of pictures which were first originated in his fertile brain. Neither must Goldsmith be forgotten as an essayist, nor as a dramatist. His periodical essays in the "Bee," his "Citizen of the World," and his stories from England's History and from Natural History, are very capital as literary work—always pleasing, and always readable. Dryasdust, the microscopic historian, may find a date wrongly placed, or the birth of a royal princess unchronicled; but he cannot say that Goldsmith's Histories have ever been so abhorrent to the young people, and so utterly dry and deterrent, as to shut up their minds and make them positively hate History for ever after. The friendship of Goldsmith and Johnson, so admirably told by Forster in his "Life," is very true—very touching and honourable to both. When "poor Goldy" died, Johnson wrote his epitaph, calling him *potens ac lenis dominator*, a soft and powerful ruler, of our tears or laughter.

There is one view of this author's character which the public generally miss: not his charity, goodness, or generosity—not his good-humour, wit, and fun in essay, novel, comedy, or tale, but his admirable workmanship in all. When he was in London, surrounded

with dependants as poor as himself, and lending that peculiar vessel full of coal, the very mention of which, improper as it is to ears polite, deepens the pathos of the story, he worked for all sorts of booksellers, notably for one Griffiths, who was a hard taskmaster; and for this man and others he produced innumerable little tales for children, which no doubt now float about unrecognized—save one, "Goody Two Shoes." Into this, as into everything else which he has written, Goldsmith has thrown his whole heart. There is no despising nor looking down upon his subject with the simple doctor; hence, poetical in spirit, "he touched nothing," said Johnson, "that he did not adorn." From such a man such praise should be immortal, as indeed it will be.

By far the most prominent figure in the literary world of England in the eighteenth century is Dr. Samuel Johnson, the representative Englishman of his day, firm, stalwart, honest, dogmatic, truthful, somewhat tyrannical, but always tender, beautiful in heart and humble-minded, persevering, and ardent for the good cause. He contributed to English literature a true novel, in the right sense of the word, "Rasselas," known as one of the best of that species once so prevalent, and now so much shunned, "a moral tale." Moral tales were then in fashion, both here and abroad. The purpose of the writer was not only to amuse, it was to instruct, not only to pass the time of the reader, but also to touch his heart, and make him reflect upon the goodness and greatness of God, and the immutable decrees of Providence, acting upon the patience, endurance, and fortunes of the hero and heroine. The demand for this kind of tale has long ceased. People are now too impatient to be *taught;* or they fancy that amusement

ıy is their due, as it surely is their aim. There is a
ɔry told of an officer in an Irish inn, who called the
aiter to him, and complained of the dirty plate on
/hich was the chop provided for his meal. "Sure,"
said the waiter, "your honour knows that every one
must eat dirt in the course of his life." "I know that,
you rascal," cried the officer; "but another time bring
me the chop on one plate and the dirt on the other; I
prefer to mix them for myself." This will illustrate the
feelings of our age, which has been defended by some
critics for its impatience at being taught or talked to.
No man who writes a novel or a story, says one, has a
right to make it the vehicle for anything else but the
plot of the little drama that he unfolds. In short, they
prefer to have the moral on one dish, and the tale on
the other, and to mix them for themselves. But Johnson's
"Rasselas" deserves to be read on account of its real
merit, and from its being a representative book. It
was appropriately written by one of the noblest, best
and poorest of men who ever lived, in the nights
one week, to pay the expenses of his mother's funera
It is a tale about a Prince of Abyssinia, the autho
knowing (though he knew almost all that was to
known in his day) about as much about Abyssinia
he knew of the inhabitants and geography of the mo
"It is, in fact," says a writer, "a series of essays
various subjects of morality and religion—on the
cacy of pilgrimages, the state of departed souls,
probability of the re-appearance of the dead, the
gers of solitude, &c." It is well remarked, too, tha
Abyssinia the Prince and his companions talk just a
wisely and as well as did Johnson and Reynolds ir
or at the club. It is tinged, this little fan

ciful romance, with the author's habitual melancholy, but it is full of sound sense, and is a perfect mine of deep reflection. It may not live except in the ponderous works of its author; for the world grows so full of books that it will frequently be overlooked; but whoever reads it, will find that he has not wasted his time in company with the very fictitious Prince of Abyssinia.

A curious work in its way, without any morality, not even the little assumption of it that its author could put on, is "The Castle of Otranto," published in 1764 by Horace Walpole, and written by him as a kind of proof of strength at one sitting. It is usually printed with a much prettier and purer story, "The Old English Baron," by Miss Clara Reeve, and may be taken as the first of a long series of tales of a "Rococo" taste, made up of ghosts, old castles, secret passages, armour, old oak chests, seneschals, my lady and my lord and such dolls and upholstery as are found in the predecessors of Sir Walter Scott. Walpole published it anonymously, as from a manuscript found in the north of England, and printed at Naples, in black letter, in the year 1529. "I wished it to be believed ancient," wrote Walpole, who loved to talk of this literary success, "and almost everybody was imposed upon." And yet he blamed poor Chatterton for the Rowley forgeries! Yes, everybody was imposed upon who knew nothing of old times. The monks and knights are modern fine gentlemen, dressed in theatrical costumes or "Brummagem" armour; the whole story is improbable and wild; and yet every young person reads it with pleasure on account of its "lovely" style. So much of the man himself does the story breathe, that "Otranto" might be a magnified copy of the sham-Gothic doll-

house at Strawberry Hill; and Walpole, who "loved to gaze on Gothic toys through Gothic glass," seems to have thrown his renaissance and semi-antique life as much into the one as into the other. There can, however, be no doubt that this story had a very powerful effect on the writers that followed; nay, that it led, amongst other things, to the study of architecture, mediævalism, the love of the Gothic, the writing of Sir Walter Scott's great romances, and even to the revival of the love of colour, glitter, show, and pictorial decoration observable in the religious services of a large portion of the people of this land.

Chapter XXIV.

ENGLISH PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS.

IT has been already explained how certain literary fashions, or even single performances, begot other fashions and performances; how the drama arose from the monks feeling that there was a necessity to teach the "mysteries" of their religion to those who could not read nor write; how it passed through the romantic and historical phases, until, growing corrupt, it gave rise to certain self-constituted censors of the press, the periodical essayists; so that the government of good, if not the finger of God, may be seen in the world; and without the Church even, there is always to be found, as in the days of the wicked Israelitish kings, a band of men, "whose hearts God has touched," to watch over the teaching of the people, and to keep it pure, wholesome, and manly. This is of course the view of only one phase of the question; but it is a broad, wholesome, and earnest view, and will bear thought and inspection.

The English, a people always either political or religious, and often both, were ever fond of lecturing their

neighbours. In the good old times, sermons three hours long, indulged in some sixteen times a week, gave a full vent to the preaching passion of the advisers; but afterwards, when learning became emancipated from the church, we see the tendency to guide and sermonize break out in the poet. Chaucer introduces a very long, and somewhat dull sermon, in his "Canterbury Tales;" and others followed his example. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote, not only his "History of the World," but a series of Essays, "Advice to his Son." John Lyly, whom Sir Walter Scott has somewhat ignorantly represented as a foolish pedant, published in 1579-81 a very valuable collection of Essays, in two parts—the one called "Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit," the other "Euphues and his England"—to which I have made slight reference in a preceding chapter—a quasi romance, but interspersed with didactic matter of a very beautiful character. Lyly's book exhibits great care in the choice of language; its style is neat and antithetical, and it is notable for the cadence and harmony of its prose. Lyly became unwittingly the inventor of *Euphuism*, a refined or over-refined way of speaking, which both Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott have ridiculed. Edward Blount, the bookseller, writing in 1632, truly says—"Our nation are in his debt, for a new English which hee taught them. Euphues and his England began first that language. All our ladies were then his schollers; and that beautie in court which could not parley Euphueisme was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French." Lyly, who was also an admirable dramatist, though sometimes guilty of drowsy monotony of diction, alliteration, punning

and such like puerilities, did in truth write in a very clear, noble style, as will be seen in these extracts, taken haphazard from a "Letter from Euphues to Botonio [advising him] to take his exile patiently." The reader will observe the fall and antithesis of the style:—"If I were as wise to give thee counsaile as I am willing to do thee good, or as able to set thee at libertie as desirous to have thee free, thou shouldest neither want good advice to guide thee, nor sufficient help to restore thee. Thou takest it heavily, that thou shouldest be accused without colour, and banished without cause; and I thinke thee happy to be so well rid of the court, and bee so voide of crime." The next extract reminds us of a noble speech in Shakespeare's "Richard II.:" "Nature hath given no man a country, no more then she hath a house, or lands, or livings; Socrates wold neither call himself an Athenian, neither a Græcian, but a citizen of y^e^ world. Plato would never accompt him banished y^at^ had y^e^ same fire, aire, water, and earth, that he had before, where he felt the winters blast and the summers blaze, where y^e^ same sun and the same moone shined; whereby he noted that every place was a country to a wise man, and al parts a pallace to a quiet minde."

In the year 1603, John Florio, son of an Italian, and tutor to Prince Henry, published a translation of "Montaigne's Essays," a book which at once became favourite of all scholars, and was read by Shakespeare, a copy with an autograph of the poet having been sold some years ago for £100; it is now preserved in the British Museum. The great dramatist borrowed from Florio's version some passages of which he made use in his plays, notably in the "Tempest."

These Essays, the most amusing, gossiping, curious, and original, that were ever written, were followed up at intervals by other serious writers, including Sir Matthew Hale, ("Contemplations Moral and Divine," and "Letters to his Children," 1676,) and Lord Clarendon, ("Essays Moral and Entertaining,") until, seeing the way in which these contemplative writers were relished, and observing how much both the manners and morals of the English people needed amendment and refinement, Sir Richard Steele projected, and, aided by Joseph Addison, carried on, first the "Tatler," and afterwards the "Spectator," a folio of a single leaf, or of a folded leaf, published at one penny. This wonderful sheet contained letters from correspondents—many of these being fictitious—answers from the editors, stories, witty or humorous anecdotes, apologues, theatrical advertisements, and moral essays. The design was a noble one, and it was well carried out. It did more than it tried to do; it concealed (as the wiser part of our Press now does, in opposition to the less influential, more pronounced, and sillier portion, which talks very much about its mission and calling,) its real deep intention, and professed only "to entertain readers in general, without giving offence to any one. It inculcated a general affability of manners, without any "ostentatious arts," while it effected quietly, but surely, its great design—"To correct the vices, ridicule the follies, and dissipate the ignorance," which too generally prevailed in the eighteenth century. These were its great and noble objects, which were carried out "by enlivening morality with wit, and tempering wit with morality;" and it has, and deserves the high praise of having tended to "cultivate the un

derstanding, refine the taste, and augment and purify the moral feelings of successive generations."

It may be as well to give a short sketch of the great men who, in corrupt days, without precise affectation, with easy manners, and a genuine faith and goodness, took such effectual means to better the age in which they lived. Richard Steele was of an old English family, but born in Dublin in the year 1671. His father was a counsellor and secretary to the first Duke of Ormond; and as the jest goes that a man is not a horse because he happens to be born in a stable, so Steele cannot be claimed as an Irishman because of the accident of his birth. Still Sir Richard had the freshness, freedom, love of jollity, liking for strong drink, ingenuity, and resource of the clever people among whom he was born. He did not long remain in Ireland, being brought to London, and at a very early age placed for education in the Charter House, since celebrated for educating Thackeray and John Leech. Though educated at Oxford, Steele loved the Army so well, that (his friends refusing to forward his interest) he entered the Horse Guards as a private. In those days all the privates of that regiment were gentlemen from their position; but Steele's wit and frankness so pleased his officers that he was soon raised from the ranks, and became an ensign in the Guards. In 1701 he was secretary to Lord Cutts, and had a company given to him, and so became Captain Steele. Strongly imbued with religion, Captain Dick was as strongly biased towards good-fellowship; and as society then thought drunkenness a very excusable failing, Steele too often followed his military friends in their dissipation, but they declined to follow him in

his sincere religion and his heartfelt remorse. To bind himself more thoroughly to morality he wrote and published a curious little tractate called the "Christian Hero;" but, says a writer, "the result of this was exciting the pity of the worthy and the derision of the dissolute." To us it should only excite a generous admiration for the young soldier whose weakness was almost atoned for by such true goodness. He then produced the "Funeral," a moral comedy, and afterwards the "Tender Husband," and the "Lying Lover" —comedies written conformably with the notions of Jeremy Collier, who (in 1698) had written so violently against the immorality and profaneness of the stage. His last-named play was, however, too good for the people; it was, as he says, "damned for its piety;" and in April, 1709, he issued the first number of the "Tatler," a serial of essays, published thrice a week. This continued until January, 1711, and Addison assisted his friend in its production. It was only two months after its decease that the friends (principally the more active Steele) started the "Spectator," which ran to seven volumes. The eighth, published after the lapse of some time, came out three times a week. Steele afterwards published the "Guardian," the "Englishman," the "Lover," "Town Talk," the "Tea-Table," "Chit-Chat," the "Plebeian," and the "Theatre;" and, after a life of trouble and anxiety, fruitful of projects that came to little, he died in 1729. His essays are not so polished nor so fanciful as those of Addison, but they are full of good honest writing; and, in broad humour and creative power, Steele is *certainly* far superior to his partner and coadjutor.

*J*oseph Addison, whom Thackeray has so thoroughly

belauded, was the eldest son of a religious author, the Rev. Launcelot Addison, Dean of Lichfield, and was born in 1672, in Wiltshire. He took his degree of M.A. from Magdalen College, in 1687, and in his twenty-second year first appeared as a poet, in some verses addressed to Dryden. The public has long forgotten Addison's verses, save one hymn; but, poor as most of them are, some turgid lines procured him notoriety, the friendship of Lord Somers, and a pension of £300 a year, on which he travelled abroad, and saw much. As we have now under our present Government hardly any rewards for literary merit, we turn with a sigh to the days of King William, when such slender merit obtained a reward which enabled a servant of the public—as an author is, in the best sense—to fit himself for further work. During Addison's tour in Italy he wrote the greater part of his tragedy of "Cato" and other poems; but the death of King William put an end alike to his pension and his travels.

The publication of a poem, "The Campaign," procured Addison further patronage. In it the Duke of Marlborough, perhaps the most complete and effective military genius England has ever produced, was, with a somewhat too bold simile, compared to an angel:—

> So when an angel, by Divine command,
> With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
> Such as of late o'er pale Britannia pass'd,
> Calm and serene he drives the furious blast,
> And pleased th' Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

This passage, which probably touched the remembrance of the Lord Treasurer as to the Great Storm of 1703, *at once* procured from him a post for the poet.

In 1705 he accompanied Lord Halifax to Hanover, and was made Under-Secretary of State. He was an excellent Crown servant; was in succession Keeper of the Records, Secretary of the Regency, and a Lord of Trade. He married the Countess Dowager of Warwick; was rich enough to lose in one year £2,000 and an estate in the Indies worth £14,000, and not to feel it; but was so unhappy with his noble and supercilious wife, with whom he indeed "wedded discord," that he hurried to the consolation of the bottle, and thus, it is said, hastened his death, which took place at Holland House (whither he had retired with a pension of £1500 a year, equal to at least £3000 now), on the 17th of June, 1719. Nine days afterwards he was buried in Westminster Abbey, whither he was borne by great lords and exalted personages.

Addison was essentially a lucky author; and although he deserves high praise, we cannot help comparing his good fortune with the fate of Steele and Swift, the one a much better-hearted man, and the other a far greater genius, and wondering why it was so ordained. Soft, gentle, persuasive, with just enough of genius to make every thing he did good, with not enough greatness ever to act against the public or the Government, Addison easily rose to the head of the literature of the day, while far greater men were below him. Everything he touched had a share of success; everything he embarked upon was happy, save his marriage. Poor Dick Steele blundered along with the "Tatler" without reward; but when Addison aided him with the "Spectator," the sale rose at once to 20,000; an enormous circulation in those days. Addison's luck has followed him with his biographers. He is by them held as the

"swell" author, the gentleman of caste and rank, the man never guilty of an impropriety, save the then fashionable one of the bottle; still, as Pope says, he gives

> His little senate laws,
> And sits attentive to his own applause.

But when we judge Addison as an author, he takes in his own walk—that of essayist—a place in the foremost rank. "Whoever," says Johnson, "wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." Eustace Budgell, John Hughes, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Thomas Parnell, John Byrom, Tickell, Philips, and Henley, with other gentlemen, were occasional contributors to the "Spectator;" and with such a staff we need not wonder at the success of the first penny daily serial of its kind.

The success of the "Spectator" gave an impulse to the periodical review and literary miscellany, and for years afterwards, every now and then its effects were visible in successive ventures of the same kind. In the "Craftsman," Bolingbroke was the chief writer, and this ran from 1726 to 1731. In 1718 Ambrose Philips, who had written in the "Spectator," started the "Free-Thinker; or, Essays on Ignorance, Superstition, Bigotry, Enthusiasm, Craft, &c.," interspersed with several pieces of wit and humour, designed to restore the deluded part of mankind to the use of reason and common sense." This had considerable success. The "Museum" was another venture, commenced in 1746; to which Horace Walpole, Akenside, and the two Wartons contributed. On every side the *writer was freeing himself* from patronage, and firmly

establishing his profession, by appealing to the middle classes, among whom the mass of readers will always be found. He became the censor of manners and morals; he strove to banish rudeness, vice, and frivolity; he taught people to think calmly and to act wisely. Insensibly he educated the English people, and drew them from a very dark and ignorant state. Many hands were at this excellent work, more able than statesmen. more effective than the clergy, because addressing larger numbers, and with far greater vigour and ability. Among these publications may be mentioned the "Guardian;" next to it the "Rambler," almost wholly written by Dr. Johnson during 1750-52; the "Adventurer," by Dr. Hawkesworth, 1752-54; the "World," a weekly paper, edited by Edward Moore, 1753-56; the "Connoisseur," edited by George Colman, 1754-56; the "Old Maid," by Mrs. Frances Brookes; the "Idler," the "Censor," and various other papers. Then after some period came Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," and in 1779 the "Mirror." And this brings us to our own time; for the conductor of the "Mirror" was Henry Mackenzie, who died in Edinburgh in 1831 aged eighty-five. The "Mirror" was succeeded by th "Lounger" in 1785; this lasted for one hundred an one numbers, and died in 1787. A mere list of name and titles connected with the periodical literature the present century would suffice to fill a volume su as that now in the reader's hands; I may therefo here close this short and rapid account of those earl periodical writers who did good service in insensi inculcating virtue and good feeling, and whose hon purpose, energy, and fecundity are truly to be wonder at.

Chapter XXV.

POETS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

Introductory.

AS some speak of Christianity, saying that it has an especial power of development, so one may—indeed, for purposes of comprehending its mission, must—speak of poetry. And truly the comparison is a fit one, and not degrading to religion; because poetry is itself so high and noble, that whilst it softens it lifts the heart to worship, and makes the proud intellect bend in adoration.

The development spoken of is this; that at first, as children are taken with the mere jingles of the rhyme, so men are pleased with the simple fetters of verse, and poetry becomes a story-teller, an historian, or the embalmer of some legend. She may also assume the garb of the tragic muse, and astonish us with the horror of the scene; then she may please us with comedy, and flatter us with love songs; after which she shall assume the gown of the doctor and become a controversialist on some theological question; lastly, she reclothes herself in her own shape, putting off these play-

ful disguises, in which she pleases and informs so many, and becomes the high interpreter of Nature—the excess of soul which alone can reveal God to us in all his fulness. For poetry is the highest feeling men can have. Insomuch as the man is a poet, in a like degree is he noble, great, partaking of the best in this world, and surely akin to the great in the next. So much the grander if he be true to those feelings; so much the more accursed if he be false to them. Poetry, like the kingdom of God, is within us, and given to us all. It makes the world joyous to the child; it is the one fresh feeling which lingers in the old man's heart. Leigh Hunt, one of the many who have tried to define poetry has told us that it is

> That which sets thought a part
> To worship Nature with a choral heart.

Others urge that it is the best thoughts of every man clothed in the best expression; but neither of these definitions will do. Poetry is the spirit which sets the soul at harmony with God. Hence its fine expression always makes us feel happy; hence it must be true, it must be pure, it must be elevating. Hence we find it in tragedies and histories, in Homer, in Plato, in plays and songs, in Shakespeare and Keats, in old ballads and country legends, such as in "Chevy Chase," in the love songs of the court or of the people, in Lovelace or in Burns. These songs do not survive, these legends do not please, but for the poetry they hold. Homer would be dead, and the long plays of Shakespeare as dry and drouthy as a bad sermon, but for the poetry which keeps them alive. Whatever is highest and noblest in any of these works, and in archi-

tecture, painting, and sculpture as well, is poetry, and that alone gives the glory to the work. Thus, too, high mountain-peaks, clothed with the pure chaste snow, and turned to glory by the rosy gilding of the sun, are seen afar off, and are beauteous, wondrous, ennobling, and grand, and form indeed *the* mountain, while we regard not the vast, barren, and heaped-up mass which lies at the foot and in the middle regions.

This, then, is the development of poetry. It amuses people in their wild and rough youth; it teaches them and instructs them; afterwards it inspires and ennobles them in their maturity and age.

In preceding chapters the reader was conducted down to the period when, through Dryden, Pope, Young and William Cowper, English poetry became, not the plaything—as it was in the days of the Restoration—but the priestess; and in the hands of William Wordsworth, the greatest and purest of our metaphysical poets, she assumed something of a grandeur which she had never exhibited before. What that is, Wordsworth himself shall tell. "I have felt," he says,

> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime,
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
> A motion and a spirit which impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

Wordsworth was born in 1770, and died in 1850, and during all that long period never appears to have done or thought anything base. Attracted and surprised by the great French Revolution, he and his friends, Southey

and Coleridge, fancied that they recognized in that movement much that was great and noble, and a regeneration of the people. Southey, born in 1774, wrote "Wat Tyler," a tragedy, in which the right of insurrection against tyranny—a right which no one now denies—was plainly enforced. Wordsworth wrote a sonnet on the dungeon where Henry Marten, the regicide, was confined. Coleridge asserted that France had "stamped her strong foot and vowed she would be free." In short, the three young men and their school exhibited such a love of humanity, French democracy, expansion of mind and liberty, that all the old Tory school of England was set against them, and critic after critic spat his spite upon them, calling them the Cockney school, the Lakers, the Lake school, and holding them up to ridicule and hatred. With them, but not of them, were Leigh Hunt (born in 1784), a true poet and a most finished scholar, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats, three poets, finely gifted, delicate, and noble, but of varied methods and powers. On their side in delicacy of conception and in religious feeling were William Lisle, Bowles (born in 1762), George Crabbe, Samuel Rogers, Walter Savage Landor, Thomas Campbell, and others, who have acquired already the position of classics in the English language. While opposed to them in elevation of feeling, in treatment of subject, in knowledge, and in reverence, yet inspired by the same wondrous poetry, were two men of brilliant genius, of piercing power, lofty imaginings, but of far lower aspirations—George Gordon Byron and Thomas Moore. As the contest was before the lady of the tournament, the world, it is needless to say who immediately won Lord Byron, who wrote love verses, satire, personal an-

descriptive poems, tragedy and tragi-comedy, and who pressed his fiery Pegasus into every arena, making him bound and curvet before the public in a most astounding manner, was adjudged to be the first knight, and won not only the crown, whereby he became comet of the season, but, in a very few years, more than £15,000 sterling for his verses. Southey found that his solid and scholarly verse would not pay at all, and retired to write more scholarly and more splendid prose. Shelley won scandal, objurgation, hatred. Coleridge gave the most imaginative poetry to the world it had ever seen since "Comus" and "Queen Mab;" and the world, by the pens of the critics, said he was an incomprehensible madman; so he retired, too, to metaphysics, religion, talk upon every subject in the world —the finest uninspired talk ever listened to—and to be a pensioner on his friends' kindness. Wordsworth never found poetry *pay* in his lifetime, though he enjoyed the barren title of "laureate," and retired to the hills of Cumberland, to live alone with nature; while Thomas Moore, familiarly called "Tommy," exhibited his muse in a very free and careless undress, wrote love songs, Persian tales, Irish melodies, translations of Anacreon, ditties for the drawing-room, and erotic stanzas for the after-dinner gatherings of the men of those days, dying in full savour of fame, having been rewarded by the public with at least £30,000 in his long life, for prose and verse. But now the world, having recovered its senses, reverses the base verdict which she gave; and on the most conspicuous pedestals allotted in the Temple of Fame to the men of their day, stand Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley.

Wordsworth has the honour of being the poet of

Nature, and living under her habitual sway. "Nature," he says, "never did betray the heart that worshipped her;" and the poet, it is worthy of remark, not only worships the inner worth and truth in man, and in his soul, but also the external forms and manifestations of God's power and goodness, as well as his greatness and wisdom, that are seen in the clouds, the sea, the rocks, the mountains, or the flowers.

> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Beyond this frequent reference to what is noble and pure—a sentiment beyond all praise, and fit accompaniment of the highest genius—the poet felt that he was a priest of the Muse, and spoke out in every way, and on every occasion, against the advancing selfishness and worldliness of the age. He had throughout the deepest religion, and reliance, not so much on himself as on his inspirer, God. Truth, beauty, love, hope, simplicity, were what he sought to bring men back to. A severe student, he polished and arranged his verse, and wrote much; and much of this is prosaic, stilted, and of little worth. But what he does well is equal to any in the language. His ode on the "Intimations of Immortality" is simply the very finest piece of its kind that ever was written or will be written. It is unsurpassed and unsurpassable. His sonnets are almost equal to Milton's—what higher praise could be given?—his "Excursion" the finest moral and meditative poem, without a purpose, ever written. He had a *curiosa felicitas* in single lines that is marvellous. Take those two that we have quoted, and these in his sonnet to Milton—

Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart ;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens—majestic, free.

d also these, on beholding London from West-
ıster Bridge—

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep ;
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God, the very houses seem asleep,
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

these lines have indeed, in Wordsworth's own
rds—

The gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land ;
The consecration, and the poet's dream ;

l when first read are like a revelation. Many a
dent of this great man may not himself be an arti-
ate poet, but as he studies he will love true good-
ıs and poetry more and more, become an infinitely
›pier man, gifted with a higher kind of happiness,
l will regard his fellow men with a sweeter rever-
:e and love. Algernon Swinburne, himself a great
: imperfect poet, says of him, "The incommu-
able, the immitigable might of Wordsworth, when
god has indeed fallen on him, cannot but be felt
all, and can but be felt by any ; none can partake
l catch it up. There are many men greater than
—there are men much greater ; but what he has
greatness is his only. His concentration, his ma-
:y, his pathos, have no parallel : some have gone
her, many lower ; none have touched precisely the
ıe point as he." Wordsworth has been laughed
or his simplicity, because his art is so great, and he
: concealed it with such care, that many think it is

none at all. Read, for instance, those stanzas called "Lucy," in which the simple pathos looks so like plain prose, and yet is so intense, that when truly felt it causes a desolate agony. Let any one who has lost one dear to him repeat these lines, and ask whether they are not the truest poetry :—

> She lived unknown ; and few could know
> When Lucy ceased to be :
> But she is in her grave ; and oh
> The difference to me !

It could have been but the mere madness of personal jealousy that blinded Byron to the transcendent merit of this great man, from whom, hoping in some other place and time to return to, we must tear ourselves away. But first note this, that the self-consciousness of Wordsworth always makes him regard Poetry as a holy thing, and himself as the lonely priest—ministrant, a servant of God and Nature—apart, holy, and great. With him, at least, Poetry is not an excitement, nor a game, nor a trade—but a service.

The great friend of Wordsworth, and as poet, theologian, thinker, critic, talker, and as having influence on other great men, great writers, theologians, thinkers ; by far the most remarkable man in the literary world of the century, was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He, born at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, in 1772, was from eight to fourteen a playless day-dreamer, a *helluo librorum*, and, at eighteen, had a stock of erudition that would have puzzled a doctor of divinity. Such a boy, full of inquiry, doubt, poetry, could not but have become a great man, had he, with his immense grasp of mind, *but* possessed determination. But he was born *essentially* critical, and, in youth, wavering. He fell into

Deism, grew out of it, enlisted as a dragoon, became a Unitarian preacher, and, by sheer force of logical thinking, worked his way until he became the firmest of Trinitarians, the most staunch of Churchmen, opposed to Rome on one side, and to Latitudinarianism on the other. Then he threw himself into literature, lectured upon Shakespeare and other dramatists and poets, translated Schiller—and improved what he translated —wrote philosophical essays—"The Statesman's Manual," "Aids to Reflection," "Biographia Literaria" projected reviews, edited a newspaper, published his poems, and, making but little money with all his immense talent and genius, retired to the house of a friend at Highgate, where, visited and surrounded by those who knew how great he was, he filled the post of an inspired talker until he died. "It had been the lot," said one of his followers, "of no Englishman since the time of Johnson, to have so many and such devoted admirers. Coleridge's thought, erudition, vision, honesty, poetic feeling, reverence, and faith were unsurpassed. There was not a greater mind in England; and that mind was given entirely to Christian philosophy and the service of God. Such immense knowledge and such wisdom, combined with true humility, had hardly been before seen. There could be no *motive* for his faith, as 'twas then the method of assigning such, for he gained nothing by it but peace of mind in his many illnesses, weaknesses, sins, and troubles; and yet no bishop could have been a more constant, earnest, zealous champion of the Church." But it is of Coleridge's poetry we have to speak. His utterances were but part of his system; like *the leaves of the Sibyl*, they but scattered forth part

of the fulness, inwardness, warmth, and completeness of his convictions; and his philosophy has been lost to us—save that he himself was the father of a school of earnest and humble thinkers, and will yet beget more. Of true poets he is one:—he has dared, and known, and doubted—has penetrated into the sanctuary of poetry, and trod the utmost limits of the knowable—and yet dares humbly to write himself a Christian. The example of Coleridge was great, valuable, beyond price, to the young men at the beginning of this century of doubt.

Two other poets—John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley—remain to be spoken of in this hasty generalization. These two are of the poets proper. They sing they know not why, and are rather children of impulse, or, as it is the fashion to call it, inspiration, than of culture, schooling, or endeavour. Both had high aims, neither of them much "moral" feeling, in the ordinary sense; certainly little reverence for religion as it was taught by schools of divinity. Keats, in the sweetest and most unconscious way, brought back to us the feelings of a Pantheist steeped to the lips in Grecian mythology, and by pure genius, although an imperfectly educated boy and a "Cockney," has shown a deeper insight into the old Greek life and Greek faith, than many a learned Fellow of a college. Similarly, he is more penetrated with the spirit of country life—there is more leafiness, greenness, and freshness in his verses—than even in those of poor John Clare, the Northamptonshire ploughman. He is a delicate poet, perfect in his sweetness, though not always in *his* method. Dying of consumption at Rome, after being deeply hurt, but not, as Byron stated, killed,

by one of those blundering pieces of savage injustice which critics write as if to show their own incompetence, the poet dictated his own epitaph: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water," expressive of his modesty and his disappointed hopes. Posterity has reversed this entirely.

> Not marble nor the brazen monuments
> Of princes shall outlive my powerful rhyme,

wrote Shakespeare of his own. We may at least say the same of John Keats. The student must read him. He will thereby gain a great insight into other things than poetry.

Of Shelley, as one of the representative men of the age, a few words will not be out of place in closing this chapter. And truly it is difficult to speak of him in adequate terms of praise as a poet, or of pity as a man. The son of an old Sussex baronet, unhappily for himself, he was born a poet in a time of revolution, scepticism, and of sectarian bitterness. He incessantly read and speculated; and, more truly Christian than those about him, looked upon religion as then practised, as hostile to humanity—as calculated to make men enemies, not brothers. At seventeen he made a heroine of Margaret Nicholson, because she had attempted to shoot the king; then issued a syllabus of Hume's free-thinking essays, and challenged the University of Oxford to dispute with him. Being expelled, he married a girl a little younger than himself, and became wretched. Metaphysical, pure in morals, antagonistic to order, he became a poet, with the proviso of being an Atheist. Loving mercy, brotherhood, sweetness, and gentleness, he stood forth as *an enemy to Christ,* and represented God as an aveng-

ing fiend. It needed brilliant poetry to atone for all this crooked and angular perversity of judgment; and in Shelley we have the purest, sweetest, and best. There are pieces of his which no one else can ever hope to rival; there are passages in "Queen Mab" unsurpassed for the tenderness of human love, which begot the scorn of scorn and hate of hate that vexed him. He who is firm in faith may read Shelley, although booksellers have been prosecuted for publishing his books; and the Government, urged by his relations, forbade him to educate his own children. He mistook the side he fought on, but in his heart he fought for Christian principles. It is of him, surely, that Tennyson has written these noble lines which we quote, because it is in that spirit we are convinced that Shelley is to be judged and read; in that alone is he without danger to the young. "Doubt, you tell me," says Tennyson, "is devil-born."

I know not: one indeed I knew
  In many a subtle question versed,
  Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
Yet ever strove to make it true:

Perplex'd in faith, but pure in deeds,
  At last he beat his music out.
  There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

Chapter XXVI.

POETS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

Lord Byron.

MR. DISRAELI, in a speech made some time since from the chair at a dinner of the Literary Fund, tried to show, not only that men of letters have more excuses for their foibles than others (in which he was wrong), but that, by a mysterious and special manner, they arise at certain times in groups and galaxies, as it were, and then die out again; and, what is more curious, that at the beginning of this century, just when the poetic faculty was richest and noblest, so also the critical faculty, which is a very different thing, indeed, was brought out in its most prosperous and fecund state. Up came a set of poets, and up came a set of trenchant reviewers. Literature, which had for some time been in a semi-dormant state, seemed to spring up again; and, indeed, if one were to blot out of English literature all that has been written from the beginning of this century, almost the larger half of it would be gone.

Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Coleridge, have been

spoken of in a mere cursory way; but I would urge the reader not to pass them over too hastily, and further on he will find some additional remarks on these distinguished men of their age. Almost every line of these poets is worth study; but there is another great poet of whom we have yet to speak, their contemporary, friend, and sometimes their enemy—a brilliant young man, who blazed into notoriety like a comet; whose life, manner, temperament, loves, marriage, whose whole surroundings, in fact, even to his death, were romantic, and whose short career has furnished more themes for critics than the life of Nestor or Methuselah: this extraordinary man was Lord Byron. He arose at a time when literature was out of favour with lords. Time had been, and was past, when it was actually fashionable for a nobleman to write a book, to join "the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease." To be in the fashion or the vogue (and much more foolish fashions have prevailed) a nobleman rushed into print with his ode, or his disquisition, or his satire, after the manner of Pope—and a long way after, too:—

> He writes with ease, to show his breeding,
> But easy writing's d——— hard reading,

said a critic, who satirized one of these authors, and most deservedly; so the fashion, as it could not be kept up, died out, and authorship was left to those mean creatures—people of genius. But it happened that in 1788 a thorough genius was born a lord—a poor one, and a deformed one, it is true; and from poverty and deformity arose much of Byron's strength and weakness. Proud, and already in some sort revengeful, the spirit of Byron was not touched with a

noble thankfulness that he was as he was—a noble, educated, and with a good prospect—but with extreme bitterness that he was not more, better, and greater. It is the old story. Life, as has often been said, resembles the passage up a ladder: every climber looks with envy on the altitude that others have attained, not with pity on the lowly climbers beneath him. Certain juvenile poems which Byron published were deservedly lashed in the "Edinburgh Review;" a review that was apparently started with the false notion that the reviewer's duty lay in being as ill-natured as he could be, and showing his own cleverness, while he damaged the author. Byron replied in a satire—the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers"—which brought him at once into notice, and henceforward he was a marked man. "I woke up one morning," he said, and—(but this, it is stated, was after the publication of "Childe Harold") "and found myself famous." The rest of his life exhibited the ill effects of that fame. There was at that day a clever publisher, young John Murray, of Fleet Street, who soon removed to the West End, and became the friend and publisher of Lord Byron. In due time Byron, who had reigned the comet of a season, was forgotten by the fashionable people, of which he complains bitterly; but he was not forgotten by the public. Poem after poem he poured forth—"Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," the "Bride of Abydos," the "Giaour," "Siege of Corinth," "Lara," &c.—until Murray had paid him the then enormous sum of £15,000 for poetry alone, and had made perhaps three times the sum by his works. The public eagerly bought and read sensational Eastern stories, tales of pirates, of love, misery, of rebellious pride, of very unhealthy

feelings, of hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, of men who were "linked with *one* virtue and a thousand crimes." The public was converted to Byronism; young men turned down their collars, and drank gin and water to look poetical, to be pale and miserable, to laugh at the bitterness of all the world; and to marvel, like Manfred, at their own greatness, to be haunted by a sin which they never tried to expiate. This, indeed, was the *rôle* played by the heroes of the noble poet; and such heroes grew the fashion: in novel, in poem, and in play, they were reproduced by imitators *ad nauseam;* bravoes, bandits, assassins, pirates, and corsairs alternated with Cains and Manfreds, who were ready to argue with God upon self-imposed misery, to reject his benefits with scorn, and to plunge themselves in a self-made hell, where they could for ever hug their own unhappiness. Everywhere Lord Byron had proclaimed similar ideas, and it was not unnatural that, at last, the heroes of the poet were presumed to be copies of his noble self. In the midst of the crowd of criticisms and the hubbub of fame that he had raised, Byron quitted his country to reside abroad, and to write his last and his most powerful poem, "Don Juan," which was brought out by Murray anonymously. One who knew him well at this time described him thus:—

> Sated with home, of wife, of children tired,
> The restless soul is driven abroad to roam;
> Sated abroad, all seen yet nought admired,
> The restless soul is driven to wander home;

and in the same verses he speaks of his scorn and hate for everything human: to him, he says—

The song of Braham is an Irish howl,
Thinking is but an idle waste of thought,
And nought is everything, and everything is nought.[1]

And this really describes one view of the misanthropic poet. Byron had been married; but his married life was an unhappy one, either through his own or his wife's fault, or, what is more probable, through that of both; and scandal and evil tongues assailed him even in Italy, where he formed an intimate friendship with a lady, who has recently written his life, and scolded the world. There can be little doubt of his power and genius, of his ability to reach men's hearts; but in the crucible of time, vanity, folly, and badness must be burnt away, and a man be judged by the good he has done. His "Don Juan" was published when he had gone to Greece to assist in the resuscitation of that galvanized and weakly little Power, or to indulge in the sentimentality of a crusade and a revolution all to himself; and the motive of the poem was soon understood. The hero, Don Juan, is simply a libertine, who casts the reins on the neck of his passions, and who fancies he is manly because he is gluttonous of low desires. The poet did not live to finish the work. All England rung with his fame, and his poems were sold by the thousand, while the purities of Wordsworth were scoffed at as puerilities, and the deep sense of an awful eternal responsibility in Coleridge was called "drouthy" nonsense. All the world took up "Don Juan;" and even now it is said that there are more copies of it sent to and reprinted in America than of

[1] "Rejected Addresses," by James and Horace Smith; a witty and interesting book, which gives a capital view of the characteristics *of literary men* some fifty years ago.

all our other poets put together; and it is notorious that while Shakespeare is but little understood, and the name of Wordsworth is hardly known in France, Byron is there accepted as *the* poet of England. This of course arises from the passionate and romantic nature of his muse, which finds in France a genial atmosphere, and in the selfish, ambitious, and amorous nature of French youth a fit soil.

Of "Don Juan," by far the most clever and best written of all Byron's works, it is difficult to form a correct judgment, because it is but a fragment; and unhappily what he has given exhibits us a young man in the hey-day of the sins of youth and indulgence. The poem has met with the severest condemnation and the warmest praise. There can, however, be no question as to the ability of the poet: as to his good taste and his good heart, there ever must be. No father would put "Don Juan" into his daughter's hands; nor would he consent that his son should read it until his principles were fixed, and his judgment clear and defined. It has received its worst condemnation by being reprinted and sold by certain booksellers who deal with the most corrupting literature, and by being found on the bookshelves of the rake and the man of the world. And yet—("But yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!")—it contains noble poetry, most beautiful passages, and the best literary work that its author in his mature power was capable of. This is proved by Colonel D'Alqualar's edition, with the objectionable parts expunged—forming a delightful book. It is fair, too, when the bias of the critic's mind is adverse, to record what others have said of him. *His* latest defender, Mr. Swinburne—himself a great

poet—declares that Byron has "a perfect passion, a blind desire, which exalts and impels his verse into the high places of emotion and expression. He feeds upon nature with a holy hunger, follows her with a divine lust, as of gods chasing the daughters of men. Wind and fire, the cadences of thunder and the clamours of the sea, gave to him no less of sensual pleasure than of spiritual sustenance . . . One native and incurable defect grew up and strengthened side by side with Byron's noblest qualities—*a feeble and faulty sense of metre.* No poet of equal or inferior rank had ever so bad an ear. His smoother cadences are often vulgar and facile: his fresher notes are often incomplete and inharmonious."

"Tempest and rebellion"—and here is one of the secrets of Byron's great and continued popularity—"and the magnificence of anguish, were as the natural food and fire to kindle and sustain his indomitable and sleepless spirit. The godless martyrdom of rebels; the passion that cannot redeem; the Thebaid whose first hermit was Cain; *the Calvary whose first martyr was Satan;* these, time after time, allured and inspired him."

Those sentences, written by one who almost worships Byron, will enable the reader to judge and understand him. Let him next take the judgment of a pure and grave poet, the author of "Philip van Artevelde," and he will see both sides. "Byron's misanthropy was," says this critic, "but tinsel and stage misanthropy; he hated man, because it seemed fine to do so; loved the ocean and the earth, not as servants of God, but because they were more enduring than man. In his heroes *he exhibits* not only scanty materials of know-

ledge from which to construct the ideal of a human being, but a want of perception in what is truly great or noble in our nature. Rather let us say a totally perverse judgment. His heroes are creatures abandoned to their passions, *and essentially, therefore, weak of mind.*" His idea of value in a horse would be formed,—if we parallel it with his notion of greatness and mind in man,—not on its restrained vigour, bottom, strength, endurance, and usefulness, but on its capering viciousness and swiftness in frantic terror when running away. In a word, he exalted power, appetite, and selfish indulgence, not manly reticence and philosophical restraint. Were all the world composed of Byron's heroes—Laras, Conrads, Cains, or Don Juans —it could not exist for half a century: in ten years it would be a hell. People it with the ideals of nobler poets, the men and women of Shakespeare, the Lycidas of Milton, and other pure and most natural creations which the reader can call to mind, and in five years it would be a heaven. The grander ideal is the purer, the more possible, the most true.

> Give me that *man*
> That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
> In my heart's core; ay, in my heart of hearts.

A romantic death closed the career of a poet the most romantic possible for England and the nineteenth century. Lord Byron hugged his unhappiness, sat late into the night, and wondered at looking haggard in the morning, gave a dangerous countenance to that absurd belief in the eccentricities of genius that has not yet died out, and died of fever at Missolonghi, in his 37th year. He had "a petulant and fretful appe-

tite for applause," says Swinburne, "the proper appanage of small poets and lowly aspirants," but he had at the same time the knowledge of his power and a just pride of place and of genius. When he died he was probably more exhausted and worn out than was Wordsworth at seventy. "Few have ever gone wearier to the grave, none with less fear," says his admirer. He died in public as he had lived, and the heart of England was pained to hear of the death of this noble son of genius, from whom we might have expected so much, and have gained so little. And as England looked to him, so he looked to her, as his last verses on the completion of his thirty-sixth year, written at Missolonghi, testify; and how full of sadness and unsatisfied longing they are!—

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move;
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys,
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

* * * *

If thou regrett'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honourable death
Is here! Up to the field, and give
Away thy breath.

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

Sweet verses, dangerously sweet, with a melancholy pride, but cowardly and mean in spirit. *Non sic itur ad astra!* In wasting this life we lose heaven: at thirty-six the true man is only reaching his prime. Youth lingers; wisdom and calm reflection, the guardian angels of a good man's life, shed down upon his path a light which guides him onwards. Not only is he not in his "sear and yellow leaf," but, to quote "Macbeth," as Byron quoted it, "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," begin then to surround him. The battle may rage at its hottest, but the man's courage is at white heat still. He disdains to throw down his shield and run; he does not talk of seeking out a grave, and taking his rest; rather, he would look for a place of victory, and a garland of honour. It is nauseous chatter for a boy of nineteen to speak like an old and a wearied man; but, after all, is it not far worse for a man, in his full and mature powers, clothed in the panoply of genius, the glittering armour of high birth and literary fame, to sigh and sob like a love-sick school-girl!

With all his faults, Lord Byron is the centre of great attraction, and will be so for the young for evermore. He has taken his niche in the Temple of Fame, and has had a potent influence on his own age and on ours. He has, with Keats and Shelley, in some sort brought back that worship of beauty, youth, strength, passion, and capacity, which was embodied in the mythic pantheism of Greece. He himself loved the old faith of fruition better than the new one of denial. He has published in one line his feeling that Jove, Mahomet, and Jehovah are on a level; he continually exalts the *ancient* fate, or destiny; he loves the image—the idol, *let us* remember—of the living Apollo, better than the

crucifix bearing the dead Christ; but he trembled and believed in the efficacy of the God-Man. He sees the first,—

> All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
> The shaft hath just been shot, the arrow bright
> With an immortal vengeance; in his eye
> And nostril beautiful disdain, and might,
> And majesty, flash their full lightnings by
> Developing at one glance the Deity;

and his "school"—not the herd of imitators, but his worthiest pupils—at last speak out plainly, and ask Venus "to come down and redeem us from Virtue," or sneeringly cry, "Thou hast conquered, oh, pale Galilean." It is possible that Byron never dreamt of these results; they are not the less due to him. To him, too, it is to be feared, is due the smaller respect to woman, and the impulse to treat her either as a very beautiful and poetic toy, or as a horrid bore, much to be avoided, which now obtains, and is prominent in his lordship's finest and latest work.

As the most popular and most powerful—at any rate, for immediate effect—of the poets of this century, and as a study which for many years will have a very large share of attention, it has been deemed necessary to devote so large a space to Byron. I have not judged it necessary to give any specimens of his poetry, as his works are to be found in nearly every bookcase. Passages of the highest poetry can be found in abundance in his pages, which, like the crown of a volcanic mountain, glisten with brilliant sunshine, alternated with yawning rents and almost inconceivable blackness.

CHAPTER XXVII.

POETS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

SCOTT, WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE.

HAVING devoted so many pages to Lord Byron, it may be felt that in strict justice more than as much space should be given to two at least of the very important poets whose names head this chapter. But the purpose of these essays is essentially educational, and, by the intense egotism of his style and his splendid bravery and glitter of verse and subject, Byron has projected himself much more forcibly upon the world than the two quieter, more valuable, and purer poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge. Thus in the physical world a day of sunshine mingled with refreshing rain, blown with fresh airs and gentle, cooling gusts, called in the farmer's homely tongue a "growing day," is less remarkable than a day of storm and desolation, lurid with electricity, which desolates while it lights, and vocal with reverberating thunder. Words-

worth and Coleridge, perhaps equally, but each in a different way, have had more wide and placid effect upon the minds of their successors than any men of the last century. They were not so much the teachers of the people as the teachers of those men that taught the people. Their great thoughts have filtered down, gladdening, purifying, and rendering fertile the minds of many men. Without Wordsworth we should never have had Dr. Arnold as a teacher nor Tennyson as a poet, at least their language and modes of thought must have been different. Without Coleridge we should not have known that school of reverential philosophy which, while it has kept pace with science and discovery, has yet preserved the noblest and sweetest faith in the world, to which the world owes all its good, pure and intact. These are great gains, and the men who gave them to us are great men.

Sir Walter Scott may be classed with these, not as a poet—for he was a poet only at rare intervals—but on account of the effect he had upon the world. Of him we shall speak in another chapter; his most popular poem, "Marmion," is redolent with the love of mediævalism, which in Sir Walter Scott has wrought such evil upon England, checking progress, bringing back an insane and ignorant admiration of the Stuarts, a hatred of Cromwell, difficult to root out, an admiration of old castles, armour, knights, tournaments, old furniture, painted windows, crosses, priests' garments and decorated religion, which is now bearing evil results, and might, if not checked by the national common sense, lead to an imposition of priestly tyranny, which in his heart Scott hated. Thus we *have two great* progressive geniuses antagonized with

one pictorial and retrograde. And if these great authors are thus regarded, a great deal more will be seen both in them and of them than if they are taken as mere writers of poetry and fiction. For men are to be regarded especially as to the weight and power with which they operate on the minds of their fellows.

Nothing is more difficult than to give a "rough" specimen of such a poet as Wordsworth; and it is equally difficult to give a sudden, short, sharp, and decisive idea of the man. The sketch given some pages back may here be supplemented by a few additional particulars. He was born at Cockermouth in April, 1770, and lived through the period of foreign revolutionary excitement which extended to England, until 1850, and ever in increasing honour. During the cry for liberty, and the wild turmoil of radicalism, Wordsworth felt with the advanced party; but his pure and sensitive mind was soon shocked by the awful crimes of the revolutionists, and he grew up to be a thorough, ardent, and consistent admirer of the constitutional liberties of England. During the whole of a long life this poet devoted himself most sedulously to three things—the worship of God, *through Nature*, the cultivation of that genius that God had given him, and the proper cultivation of self. Hence he is an author very healthy and wholesome to contemplate. He sets himself to one steady purpose, never looks away from it, bends not to courts, nor to popularity, nor to power, nor to riches. He lives among the Cumberland lakes a poor man, thinking *the* mountain, the sky, or a common field-flower, a *grander* subject of contemplation than a bag of gold.

He publishes his poems, and critics laugh at them. They call them childish, and the author silly; and yet unheeding them, he still lives under the habitual sway of Nature, and urges that the effect of Nature and her contemplation exalt the soul to thoughts that live, while meaner, worldly glories die away—

> Perish the roses and flowers of kings,
> Princes and emperors, and the crowns and palms
> Of all the mighty, wither'd and consumed.

Let the reader mark the sweet contemplative rhythm of those few lines, and then let him imagine what sort of man he could have been who wrote the following:—

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky!
> So was it when my life began;
> So is it now I am a man,
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die!
> The child is father to the man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.

We do not wonder that such writing as this did not *pay*, when the amorous poetry of Moore and the romantic sensationalism of Lord Byron filled the market. The chief reviews called Wordsworth a fool, an idiot, a dolt, a dullard, and even put him—he dwelt among the lakes, and was a native of Cumberland—among the Cockney school of the "Lakers;" they also, we must remember, at a later period, utterly rejected Keats, and laughed with immense enjoyment over the poetry of Coleridge. But, instead of holding that battles, sieges, grand descriptions, tears, sighs, murder, blood, suicide, assassination and death alone were "*poetical*," instead of holding that kings and princes,

Timours, Bajazets, Hamets, Grand Turks, potentates, and great noblemen alone deserved a monopoly of high and pure feelings, Wordsworth quietly went on, worshipping Nature, and assuring his own heart that that which is true and beautiful, is beautiful and true in the heart of a peasant as well as in that of a great warrior or a Serene Highness.

As his poetry, so was his life, pure, sweet, useful,—and lengthy and somewhat prosaic. But what is valuable in Wordsworth's poetry is very valuable indeed; and I think a true lover of what is highest and best in poetic expression, would rather have written his "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" than any other existing piece of the same length. In Wordsworth poetry is of the greatest weight, the greatest purity, and is put forward for the very noblest use. It is to elevate, to teach, to ennoble; never to flatter, or simply to amuse and to betray. In religious loftiness Wordsworth approaches Milton, and the poet becomes the priest. It is probable that, as years go on, the fame of this great man, with his childlike simplicity and unobtrusive majesty, will grow upon the world. Certainly, upon some minds, and those of the best and wisest, it will grow. It is to be noted that, like all great poets, his sermons in verse have not a momentary, but a perpetual application. The writer dismisses him with an earnest injunction to all scholars to study him; for he is like a beautiful wood with a somewhat rough fringe of brambles and brushwood. It does not look inviting; but, when entered and studied, the traveller will find an endless source of comfort and consolation, and will discover endless scenes of beauty within its borders. Wordsworth was

a great writer and admirer of the sonnet, and it would be scarcely fair to conclude our notice of him without this citation :—

> The world is too much with us, late and soon ;
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
> Little we see in Nature that is ours :
> We have given our hearts away—a sordid boon !
> This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
> The winds that will be howling at all hours,
> And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers ;
> For this, for every thing, we're out of tune ;
> It moves us not. Great God ! I'd rather be
> A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
> Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea ;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Coleridge, as has been already stated, in many things, is an equally remarkable man ; in some yet more so. He was educated at the Blue-Coat School, London, which was a sufficient reason for the critics for ever afterwards to treat him as a Cockney. His peculiar bent of mind led him, not into the Church, though he was a born preacher, but into a far wider pulpit—literature. He entered Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1791, and abruptly quitted it in 1792, without having taken a degree, having become obnoxious on account of the revolutionary principles which he had so warmly welcomed. To his ardent admiration, France had slain her king and dipped her hands in the blood of nobles, from the purest motives ; and to Robert Southey, his friend, two years his junior, the same aspirations appeared almost divine. Full of ardent republicanism, a Socinian, preaching Unitarianism, and inflated with a notion of impossible liberty, *Coleridge, with* three other poets, Wordsworth,

Southey, and Lloyd, determined to emigrate to the wilds of America, and there to establish a *Pantisocracy* (a government of all), where all should be free, and "there should be no priest or king to mar the common felicity." While waiting for funds to emigrate, these enthusiasts met with their matches in three sisters, the Misses Fricker, of Bristol, and married them. Henceforward (and it is pleasant, while it is sad, to chronicle the failure of these good and great men) we may read in their histories the gradual advent of a calmer wisdom. The cruelties of the French Revolution, the wild excesses of Republicanism, the despotism of Napoleon, soon convinced them that the world was not yet ripe for a government by all, and that good priests and good kings must at least be kept in their places for some time. Southey became an ardent Conservative; Coleridge read himself into the most learned, faithful, humble, and devoted unpaid servant and defender of the Church of England, and the firmest Trinitarian possible. He had before this established the "Watchman," "that all might know the truth, and that the truth might make us free." He resided at Nether Stowey; officiating as a preacher of that which he afterwards hated so thoroughly, Unitarianism, at Shrewsbury and Taunton. His "Watchman" did not succeed; his poems were scoffed at; but still this wonderful man went forward in his literary life, accumulating knowledge, dispensing it freely, talking, lecturing, editing a newspaper, and writing, preaching, and talking *Coleridge* wherever he went. In many cases he was entirely above his audience; the papers that he touched perished under his editorship; his poems were not understood; his prose was pro-

nounced drouthy, wild, rhapsodical. Yet he met with great and good friends. The great manufacturers, Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood, enabled him to proceed to Germany for fourteen months, to complete his education. In 1804 he became secretary to Sir Alexander Ball at Malta, with a salary of eight hundred pounds; but he only held the post a very short time. He was born, in fact, for a studious life, and the knowledge he accumulated was immense and multifarious. In 1816, chiefly at Lord Byron's recommendation, he published "Christabel," a wild and wondrous tale, never finished. His other poetical works are not fragments, but they were produced in a very desultory manner, and were sent out mixed with prose disquisitions—"The Statesman's Manual, or the Bible the best Guide;" "The Friend, a series of Essays;" "Biographia Literaria," and "Lay Sermons;" "Aids to Reflection" (1825), and "Church and State" (1830). About that time he had nearly worn himself out with writing and thinking; and to still his restless mind and acute touches of disease he had recourse to the use of opium. Still he went on, planning and meditating. He who had little method, produced the best essay on it, republished as the scheme of the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana." His conversations have been collected in a very fragmentary way, and published as the "Table-Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge;" and a most interesting book it is. The wonderfully luminous mind of the man, the floods of knowledge, the vast strength of his wisdom, may be seen there; alas! not in its magnificent proportions, but as an Elgin marble, broken, yet noble and wonderful still. But throughout that, as *throughout his life*, wasted, as he thought it, and

imperfect and useless as a mere utilitarian might call it, there is the same frank, fearless boldness of speculation, the same firmness of purpose, the same love of what is good, pure, and holy, the same love of Nature and of Nature's God, that he exhibits everywhere; and he showed this in his epitaph, which he wrote himself. "Beneath this sod," it says,—

> A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he—
> Oh lift a thought in prayer for S. T. C.,
> That he, who many a year with toil of breath
> Found death in life, may here find life in death!
> Mercy for praise, to be forgiven for fame,
> He ask'd, and hoped through Christ: do thou the same.

One thing, at any rate, is striking enough in this poet's life—that, unlike many other writers, he loved not to expatiate on himself, but on others; that he was always modest and retiring, always enlisted on the side of God, and never in the slightest degree on that of the world or the devil. To the development of Christianity Coleridge gave a very sensible impetus. Like Dr. Johnson, but with a deeper and a finer theological instinct, he stood up in the gate and fought with the infidel, and overcame him. Permeated with the sublimity of the Old Testament, full of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Job, the enthusiast went out into the streets, disputing even with Jew clothesmen, and doing all he could to win them to the fold of the Good Shepherd. What an instructive piece of biography is here! As a thinking boy, this learned and good Christian once lapsed into Atheism; "from which I was saved," he wrote, "by the judicious conduct of Dear Dr. Bowyer" (the head *master* of Christ's Hospital, and, by the way, a severe *flogger*). "'What is the matter, boy?' said he. 'Sir,'

said I, 'I am sorry to inform you that I am conscientiously an Atheist!' 'Come along with me, boy,' thundered Bowyer; and, without a word of argument he took me into his study, and flogged me soundly. That flogging saved me. Had he stopped to argue, it would have flattered my pride, and I should have been lost for ever."

Coleridge's poems are written for poets, or at least for men of a delicate ear and sensitive perception of truth and beauty, and are distinguished for their musical rhythm, their fancy, and sweet melody. What there is of them is almost all good, and what is excellent is far beyond all poets but those of the very first rank. Beyond the mere mechanical and musical beauty of the verse, there is a deep, hidden meaning, a satisfying fancy, a pure and holy conception, that makes one at once acknowledge a true poet, "with his singing robes about him"—one not content to wait in the outer courts of fancy, or to ornament himself with the mere prettinesses of rhyme, like the fashionable writers of the eighteenth century, but who penetrated at once into the Adytum, and stood in the presence of God. His "Ode to France," his "Genevieve," "Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," "Youth and Age," are, far and away, the best of the most purely poetical things produced during this century. They are so original, so entirely the poet's own, that we can find nothing else like them. Not to have read Coleridge is to have passed over a perfectly fresh species of mind. To have read him is frequently not to understand him, for he is very subtle and refined; but to read him repeatedly and understand him, is to become the heir of a rich intellectual *possession which* can never be forfeited.

Chapter XXVIII.

POETS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

Shelley, Keats, Landor, Barry Cornwall, Crabbe, and Thomas Hood.

THE richness of the English mind is nowhere seen so conspicuously as in our poets; and perhaps the most wonderful thing in all literature was the extraordinary fertility of the English mind at the beginning of this century. Let us take a group of poets, each of whom has had some effect on his age, and we shall at once see within how narrow a space of time they were born, and therefore what an amount of true genius was shining upon our little island at once.

Walter Savage Landor, a learned and rich man, generous and impulsive in all things, was born in 1775, and remained with us till 1864. Bryan W. Procter was born fifteen years later, 1790, and still survives. John Keats was born in 1796, and died in 1820; and Thomas *Hood*, born in 1798, died in 1845. These had each a distinct style, and each won a world-wide audience,

so that what they have left has added to the rich heirloom of pure and noble thoughts to which every Englishman is born. In addition to these names, we must add those of two poets, differing widely from each other and from all others, who adorned the same cycle: these are, Shelley, who died in 1822, at the early age of thirty; and George Crabbe, who lived from 1754 till 1832.

Of these poets, the highest class of genius was undoubtedly possessed by two, who were cut off in comparative youth, Shelley and Keats. Professor Craik reckons the first as by far the highest genius of all modern poets, unless it be Coleridge. Happily or unhappily, for the term will depend much upon the way in which we regard events, Shelley was opposed to Christianity, because he knew little or nothing about it; and he died before disappointment, suffering, and the greatest teacher of all, Time, could tell, soften, and teach him. His "Queen Mab" was written when he was eighteen, and is the most powerful of all early promises that poets have ever given; and from the date of the publication of "Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude," to that of his death only seven years elapsed, during which he poured forth volume after volume of poetry, rich with imagery, boldness, tenderness, and beauty, and unsurpassed in freshness and fertility of imagination. Now, during all this time, Shelley, who had decided on living at right angles with the world, who would scarcely bow to the rules of marriage, would not submit to any rites of the Church, and carried his opposition so far as to put down all Napoleon's cruelties to the fact of his eating *meat, lived, in consequence*, a very unhappy life. He was

very cruel to his first wife; and the poor girl, the daughter of a labourer, committed suicide. He married a second, Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, and regularly and systematically set at defiance all the rules of society. Perhaps he was right in his own mind, but at any rate he had no reason to complain if society treated him as no ordinary mortal. If a schoolboy throws stones at a decent man, the man will reply with a horsewhip; and we hold that the boy has little cause for complaining of cruelty. But Shelley cried out vigorously. The Almighty was to him a cruel fiend, our Saviour a hypocrite, our whole system wrong. He delighted in affording to the world the spectacle of an eccentric, wilful genius, whom the sane men of his time wondered at and avoided. He and Byron and Leigh Hunt played the little game of three against the world, and fled from London to Geneva, whence they safely railed against the English, admired Voltaire and Rousseau; wrote poetry, and talked a great deal of it, no doubt. But all this came to an end very speedily, for Shelley and his friend Mr. Williams were overturned in a boat off Leghorn. The poet's body was washed ashore, and, according to the law of Tuscany, which ordained that everything so cast ashore should be burnt, his remains were consumed, and the ashes collected, and deposited in the Protestant burial-ground at Rome. The heart was sent to Mrs. Shelley, after some resistance from Leigh Hunt, who very much wanted it; upon which Byron made the remark, "What the devil would he do with *it*, save put it in a pot, and cry over it?" And thus ended the life and mortal part of this most gifted poet. It would be of little use to quote Shelley; he who

would comprehend him must read and ponder his longer poems: this short history is merely related to account for the wildness of some of his productions. He was charitable, full of good impulses; but passionate and inconsiderate, for which his youth offers some excuse. With all his precocious genius, his "intense youth" is everywhere predominant. The most poetical of poets, and "in the white marble of his fine ideal" the most pure, his fate was to furnish a volume that, because of its blasphemy, was sold by those booksellers who dealt in impious or indecent literature. That age has passed. Shelley, with his noble aspirations, may be studied by the wise. His faults cannot do much harm; his intense and marvellous beauties will remain; and when the intoxication of this yeasty world has passed off from that aspiring soul, he, too, may be accepted among the singers of God's glory. The mission of Shelley's life and genius seems to have been to show that there was nobility, truth, and even the highest poetry in the scoffer, and that true charity should be extended to all; so that we may believe that—even if opposed to our thoughts—there *is* good in Nazareth, and that Saul may be occasionally among the prophets. The best critics are probably right in ranking the "Epipscychidion," written a year before his death, "as his crowning triumph, and for wealth and fusion of all the highest things, of imagination, expression, and of music, one of the greatest miracles ever wrought in music."

John Keats, who died two years before Shelley, is to certain minds the most rich and melodious of all poets. From his life, too, a grand lesson may be learnt; and from his poetry the unlearned may gather more of the

true Greek spirit than from dozens of lessons on Greek and Roman mythology. The grandfather of this most poetic of poets, was merely a stable-keeper; and at his house, in the unpoetic neighbourhood of Moorfields, Keats was born. Of all the kings and nobles, of all the bishops and archbishops, of all the high-born, the judges of the land, the great in the world's eyes, there was not in those days one with so beautiful a mind as John Keats; yet God thought fit to place this jewel in a London mews, and to make him the son of one who, from his narrow circumstances, could hardly give him a fit education. Such education as he had, he got at Enfield, where, his schoolfellow has told us, he was a very wild, high-tempered, and passionate boy; but before he had time to learn the classics he left, and at fifteen was apprenticed to a surgeon. However, he did not abandon his love for learning. He made a literal translation of Virgil's "Æneid," and studied Greek and Italian. Hence the remark of some foolish critics, that Keats had no learning, falls to the ground. He had what Johnson truly calls the best of learning, that which he taught himself; and his vigorous intellect and highly imaginative mind proved fit ground for that which he had sown. One of his earliest friends was Leigh Hunt—a kindly, discriminating, patient, and valuable critic,—whose advice Keats endeavoured to follow. Early in 1818 Keats published his immature but most beautiful poem, "Endymion," the first line of which has become a household word in England—

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

Nothing could have been more modest nor so cal-

culated to disarm criticism as the Preface, if critics were *critics* and generous men; nothing so fitted in those days and in these to call down truculent abuse. The writer pleaded "great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt;" and the critics took him at his word. He said, with tender modesty, "It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live." The critics (with the exception of the "Edinburgh Review" and Leigh Hunt) arose with a vile determination of burying and destroying that work which the world now so much admires. The author hoped that he "had not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness." The critics yelled with the voices of ignorant Yahoos, "He comes from no University." He gave the world his best; but a critic in the "Quarterly Review," who has ever since hidden his base head under the shield of the anonymous, wrote of him with such contemptuous severity that Shelley describes the first effects upon Keats, when he read that review, as "something like those of insanity. He was hardly restrained from committing suicide, even by constant watching;" and finally, a despair came on him which aggravated his disease, and in his convulsions he burst a blood-vessel. It has, however, been strongly denied by some authorities, that these results were anything but the symptoms of natural disease, and it is said that the poet was not in fact so deeply hurt by adverse criticism as certain of his friends supposed. After all, Byron was not perhaps far wrong in his doggerel quatrain:—

"Who kill'd John Keats?"
"I," says the "Quarterly,"
So savage and Tartarly;
"'Twas one of my feats."

Reading Ben Jonson, Spenser, and Chapman's "Homer," and especially studying the "Venus and Adonis" of Shakespeare, Keats, far more learned than his ignorant critics, showed that this poet knew where to look for models. He worked on until December, 1820, in consumption and in ill-health, died at Rome, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery there. "Here lies one whose name was writ in water," said the dying poet. So by critical stupidity, in great measure, was killed one who in sweetness and art has rivalled Shakespeare himself, and who, had he lived, might have given us a Pagan epic equal to the Christian one of Milton. As Keats grew—and three years are much in a poet's life—he improved every day. His last effort, the fragment "Hyperion," is quite equal to any verse we possess; and for combined strength and sublimity, the picture of the dethroned Saturn surely is unsurpassed in its statuesque grandeur. All young authors, all students of verse, should read Keats, should study the wonderful, luxurious music of his lines, and try and understand the happy art by which sense and sound are so wonderfully wedded together. Take, for instance, the two most musical odes in the English language—not even excepting Shelley's "Ode to the Skylark"—the "Ode to a Nightingale," and the "Ode to a Grecian Urn," and ponder, until the wonder grows upon you, the antique grace, the weight and delicacy of thought, the rare sense, the melody and gentle music of both. Call to mind that this tyro, this young stableboy surgeon,

exercises such an imperial fancy that no other man in the empire could have had happier thoughts, or more high, courtly, and true phrases than he; that his verse is now accepted by our young poets as the finest model, and that it will gain in popularity in future years; and then remember his sad fate. Shelley wrote that—

> Most wretched men
> Are cradled into poetry by wrong:
> They learn in suffering what they teach in song.

And then wonder that the poet replied only with the high scorn of this great mind—

> There are who lord it o'er their fellow men,
> With most prevailing tinsel; who unpen
> Their baaing vanities * * will see unpack'd
> Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe
> Our gold and ripe-eared hopes!

Alas, the blind folly of those who maligned and sought to crush this great poet is more to be deplored than his fate who succumbed. He has left us enough, and that of exceeding sweetness, which will last as long as our language.

Of W. S. Landor we need scarcely speak. He was greater (to the world at least) as a prose writer than a poet; but he has left some powerful verse—poet's verse—and was himself a wonder and an attraction to the poetic mind. His epitaph is the most Greek thing we know of, save that it carries with it a Christian-heathen pride, which makes it so frantically bold. Tall, splendid in form, in accomplishments, in riches, (he had given away a fortune to make the poor happy,) in benevolence, great in political vision, sought after, flattered, and even beloved, this was the best that Landor could write of Life—

He strove with none; for none was worth his strife.
Nature he loved; and next to Nature, Art.
He warm'd both hands before the fire of life:
It sinks; and he is ready to depart.

It is hardly worth while to be a poet, and, as it were, the spoiled child of fortune—to be so hard to please, and so ungrateful.

George Crabbe is one of those didactic and somewhat prosy poets, whom younger men will hardly allow to be poets at all. Born before all those last mentioned, he belonged to a former school of literature—that of Goldsmith, Johnson, and Parnell, and wrote in the same exact ten-syllabic measure, but with an originality all his own. Born of humble parents, Crabbe was educated for the medical profession, but being unsuccessful, applied to Edmund Burke, the statesman, who advised him to take orders in the Church of England, and who afterwards opened the path for his preferment. Dr. Johnson revised his poem of the "Village;" and at a later period of his life Mr. Murray, the publisher, gave him £3,000 for his poem, or series of poems, called "Tales of the Hall." Those were golden days for poets; but the public were eager for such works; and truly they contain beautiful passages and much pathos, tenderness, minuteness, and careful writing. Byron calls Crabbe—

Nature's sternest painter, yet the best.

There is a simplicity and directness in Crabbe's lines which make them easily remembered; and the truth, plot, and character in his "Tales" make them pleasant and instructive reading. His fault is that he seldom *rises* above a respectable level, and his lack of broad *and* warm sympathy with mankind causes him too often

to sit in severe judgment on slight offenders. Such quaintnesses as these are not readily forgotten—

> Old Jonas Kindred, Sibyl Kindred's sire,
> Was six feet high, and look'd six inches higher.

When an old lady falls down stairs she has

> Heaven in her eye, and in her hand her keys.

And similar lines might be cited in abundance.

After classic Landor, whose best poetry is his prose "Imaginary Conversations," and whose best verse is in Latin, let us mention Mr. Procter (Barry Cornwall, as he has preferred to be known), a man who was amongst great men—Keats, Lamb, and Coleridge—but not of them, but who is an elegant poet, and a reproducer, in the form of fragments, of many of the excellencies of the Elizabethan dramatists. Graceful, tender, finished, and with the true spirit of a high-class gentleman in all he writes and does, there are few pleasanter books than Barry Cornwall's "Songs and Dramatic Scenes;" few more fit to place in the hands of the highly-cultured and pure of both sexes. The last fruit that Mr. Procter has borne is a "Biography of Charles Lamb"—a book which should live, and will live, as a tender masterpiece, descriptive of a sadly noble life. Nor should this enumeration of the poets of a late period be without mention of Lamb himself, whose poetic efforts are few and imperfect, but sparkle in places with the true poetic flame; and whose "Essays" will ever endear him to the lovers of their fellow-men.

The poet to whom a few words will be devoted in closing this chapter, is one not yet properly recognized. Great, especially human and tender, and original, he is

thoroughly a poet of the people; and yet in his highest flights he reaches the farthest heaven of true poetry. And this man (unhappily perhaps for himself) begining in comic literature peculiarly modern, and of a fashion which is now passing away, was for years looked upon as a droll and a jester rather than a poet. Thomas Hood was the son of a publisher of the firm of Vernor and Hood, and was brought up as a silver engraver, but soon left the stool and sand-bag of the artist for the pen of the periodical writer, and for many years waged a bold war with fate, poverty, and the public, until he succumbed to ill health and incessant work in 1845. He was an author entirely *sui generis;* he is of his own school; he was like none other, and he left many who strove to imitate him, he left none like him. "What shall be said of him?" writes a critic. "Everything that is laughable, or everything that is sorrowful; for either can be indulged in with equal truth. To say that he has a perfect command over our smiles or our tears, is to express his powers very inadequately. Pathos and deep tenderness, lovely fancies and an elegant taste —or extravagant merriment, grotesque ugliness, and most ridiculous and irresistible absurdities—all these were within the range of his genius and his talent, and all have at different times been displayed." But after that sentence has been written, how inadequately it expresses our opinion of Hood! A genius of a high class cutting capers and making jokes, an author of the humour and deeper calibre of the highest Elizabethan poets, and with the gentle satire of Touchstone, an essayist in his way as subtile as Charles Lamb, a tale-maker with the *drolatique* power and capability of

Rabelais, and a poet with much of the sweetness and more than the pathos of Keats;—these together would make up Thomas Hood. Worn out as a magazine writer, and as he said with a pathetic pun, the *eating* cares of a family, with the brain-work which hard writing, which alone produces easy reading, induces, this great author died, leaving no equal, but leaving a world only then ready to know and love him. He had often pleaded the cause of the poor, and in "Punch" he made a powerful appeal in behalf of poor needle-women, called "The Song of the Shirt." Dying full of Christian faith and hope, and comforted by love and deep humility, he desired to have engraved upon his tombstone, as an epitaph, this simple memorial of the one little act that had most graced his life—"He sang the Song of the Shirt;" and under this memorial the man who excited so much merriment in his life-time, and who did so much good, the fellow of infinite goodness and infinite jest, this poor Yorick of our poets, lies.

Chapter XXIX.

SOME SCOTTISH POETS.

Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Campbell, etc.

"Conquerors," says Thomas Carlyle, "are a class of men with whom, for the most part, the world can well dispense . . . but a true poet, a man in whose heart resides some of the effluence of tone of the 'eternal melodies,' is the most precious gift that can be bestowed upon a nation." Such a gift was bestowed when Robert Burns was born, and happily upon a people who prized the precious gift at its true value. Demoralized by the exodus of some of their bravest and their best men, rendered poorer by the union with a richer country, Scotland might have fallen into the querulous temper and the periodical poverty of Ireland; but God sent the Scots a true singer, and he aroused them to a sense of their own dignity and worth. Afterwards came another man of genius; and he, too, exalted the nation; for what prophets were *unto* Israel, so the true poets are to modern nations; *and it is* not too much to say, that more than to any *politician* or inventor, more than to any abstruse

thinker or clever writer, Scotland owes her position in the world of Thought to Robert Burns, the ploughman, and to Walter Scott, the attorney. No duke ever welded a nation together as these men have done; no king ever led an army to battle, shoulder to shoulder, and in serried ranks, compact and firm, so well as the sweet native music breathed from these two men; and Scotland is proud of them, and answers for her sons like a rough but fond mother. It is the "land of Burns," and the "land of Scott." The English and American tourists pass by the homes of the great, the abbeys of the religious, and the palaces of kings, but they bow with lowly reverence as they enter the cottage birthplace of Ayrshire Rabbie, and the magnificent home, reared with so much labour, of the Wizard of the North. An English writer who loves his country may well feel sad when he contemplates the difference between the respect and veneration shown to literature by the Scotch and by the English. It seems as if the very wealth of English genius made it despised by the vulgar rich and great; and while Shakespeare waits for his monument, and many living English authors for their recognition, a noble cenotaph rises for Sir Walter Scott, and seven memorials shine beneath the cold Caledonian skies for the Ayrshire bard, whose songs echo from every street and lane, and whose poems are with his countrymen "familiar in their mouths as household words."

The story of Robert Burns's life is a sad one, and may quickly be dismissed. Great as was his genius, warm-hearted, lovable, noble, and excellent as he was acknowledged to be in many ways, he had no *abiding prudence*, and too little of that manly self-re-

liance which is a crown of glory to a man; for all the "cants which are canted" in a world full of shows to the false, but of realities to the true, the greatest is that which looks down upon a man of genius, because of his "position." If he is a poet, what does it matter whether he is a wool-comber like Shakespeare, or a ploughman like Burns? Is the Koh-i-noor, that big piece of glittering carbon, less a diamond because it was set in black wax to show it off before it was placed in the Queen's crown? "Lowliness," says the manly Shakespeare, "is young Ambition's ladder." What we want to know of a genius is, not where he is, but what he is. Clothe the Apollo Belvidere in ragged fustian, it is still the Apollo. "The cottage hath a thatched roof; within the house is Jove." Here is a great, a consummate genius, born of a poor yeoman, imperfectly educated, but soon recognized, so early as in his twenty-third year; invited by the bucks and lords of Edinburgh to dine with them, and, as such people do invite men of genius, to amuse them; then receiving a small office, being made an exciseman, in fact, and doing his work fairly; and yet even so strong a man as Carlyle, with a host of smaller writers, pities him and weeps over him. "Tears lie in him, and consuming fire, as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud," says Carlyle; but he adds, with "a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into 'articulate melody.' And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels. In such toils was that mighty spirit sorrowfully wasted; and a hundred

years may pass on before another such is given us to waste."

A hundred! ay, five hundred. But why could not Burns, with that Heaven-gifted genius of his, write as well as a gauger or a ploughman, as if among the respectables, and covered with "braid claith?" The truth is, this constant straining after position spoils a thousand poets, as Balaam's striving after money spoilt his prophesying. The poet dignifies the world: the world never did, never can, and never will dignify the poet.

> A man's best things are nearest him,
> Lie close about his feet;
> It is the distant and the dim
> That we are sick to meet.

So wrote a poet, infinitely smaller,—R. M. Milnes, now Lord Houghton; but if Burns had kept such a sentiment in heart, we should not have heard so much of the cowardly whining of biographers, that God Almighty, who gave him his imperial genius, did not also give him a coach and six, hosts of servants, troops of friends, and the frivolities of fashion, which would have rendered that genius nugatory. Clear and ringing out speaks Shelley of the discipline of lowliness and neglect:—

> Most wretched men
> Are cradled into poetry by wrong:
> They learn in suffering what they teach in song.

Burns's story, therefore, is sorrowful, because he made it so. If any man could have stood upright on his own manliness, 'twas he. He had no right to be pressing in with the dissipated aristocracy of the Caledonian Hunt, nor to look at the unequal arrangements of

Fortune, as regards social position. He was the king of men, the Shakespeare of Scotland. He forgot his royal singing robes, soiling them with drunkenness, dissipation, infidelity towards his many sweethearts, wasted the (to him) large sums of money that his works brought,[1] and died a sad, broken-hearted man, at the early age of thirty-seven. We must put his fate down to his own folly, his affectation, his bravado, his ranting, roaring, public exhibition of his genius. He is said to have sung at one of his entertainer's houses,—

> You see yon birkie ca'd a lord,
> Wha struts an stares an a' that;
> Though hundreds worship at his word,
> He's but a coof for a' that.
> * * * *
> The rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The man's the goud for a' that.

Yes; but a lord's a man too, and should not be insulted in his own house; moreover, if the poet did not go to the lord, perhaps the lord might come to the poet. But enough of this. It is because we venerate and love what is good in Burns, that we would point out where he was untrue to himself.

But he was a true singer. He sang like Shakespeare, and he stole plots like him; for almost all his best things are conveyed from other poets: that very sentence about rank is from our own Wycherly's "'tis not the king's stamp can make the metal better;" but, in stealing the bullion, Burns stamped it with his own

[1] Here, again, we must praise the quick recognition of genius which the Scots showed. Burns's first small poems produced him, in a second edition, five hundred pounds. Tennyson lost *money by* his for years. Besides much other money, Burns's *family* received for Dr. Currie's edition in 1800 more than one *thousand* pounds.

int mark. He is essentially a singer, always musical, ght, rhythmical, full of tune. Other tunes make the ongs; his songs make the tunes. His two verses of, "Had we never lo'ed so kindly," his "Macpherson's Farewell," and half a dozen others, contain more in eight lines than our ordinary novels in three volumes: they go direct to the purpose, suggest with glowing tints and outbursts of passion a story sad as death, or bright as day. He gives us a whole character in four lines. Here is the character of Macpherson, a "grim Celt, a shaggy northern Cacus," a bold border thief, and nothing more, who was deservedly hanged. But, marry! how did he die?

> Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
> Sae dauntingly gaed he;
> He played a spring, and danced it round,
> Below the gallows tree.

And what fire as well as force is there in that splendidly braggart, but noble "Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled!"—fire at a white heat strong enough to weld all Scots together. We have no such partisan songs. And truly, save of Körner and of Beranger, no other nation has had such songs; for even those fine verses of Tom Davis's in the "Nation" newspaper of 1848, did by no means equal them. "No songs," says Carlyle, "since the little careless snatches and, as it were, drops of song which Shakespeare has here and there sprinkled over his plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. With what tenderness he sings!—and yet with what vehemence and entireness!" Like a true poet, he is all a woman, and yet all a man. Read that sweet sad song, "To Mary in *Heaven!*" *Then* go in quick transition to the sly

wickedness and fun of "Duncan Gray cam here to Woo!" Take the intense tragedy, the unmitigated and inconsolable misery of this:—

> Had we ne'er lo'ed sae kindly,
> Had we ne'er lo'ed sae blindly,
> Never met and never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

And the uproarious, determined, and drunken fun, enough to make a teetotaller gnash his teeth, of "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut." What a true artist this poet must have been! Of his larger works one need not speak; it is almost all good, all *intense.* His love for humanity is so deep, that he even plunges below the earth, and pities the Devil his awful fate:—

> But fare you weel, auld Nickie Ben!
> Oh! wad ye tak a thought and men'!
> Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
> Still hae a stake;
> I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
> Even for your sake!

All these have been repeated over and over again, and yet they never tire us. After all, the biography of poets is little to us. Burns suffered and died, and has left us a legacy which can be spread all over the world, can make a barren land dear, and warm the heart of a Scotsman to his home, though he is a thousand leagues away; which has endeared manliness, uprightness, and independence; which has tinged even poverty with the golden hues of sunlight, and has made the heart soft as wax to sweet impressions,—hard as marble to retain them. We have all the good he could give; he alone bore the pain, the envy, the want, and the *longing* expectation. Alas, for him,—

> Misled by fancy's meteor ray,
> By passion driv'n;
> But yet the light that led astray
> Was light from heaven!

Sir Walter Scott, as a poet, is (and he would have been the very first to say so) not fit to lift the shoe's latchet of Robert Burns. Burns wrote for the world, for the common people; Scott wrote for literary men, gentlefolk, and lovers of knighthood, and old ballads. Hence one is vastly inferior to the other; still, as a rhyming chronicler and a teller of very fine, pure, noble stories in verse, Scott holds the highest rank. He is at the head of his school. Byron imitated this fashion of poetic tales, but was neither so pure nor so even in merit as Scott; he, as we know, shines not in his tales so much as in his "Childe Harold," and the fragment of a burlesque epic, which he styles "Don Juan." Walter Scott, though remembered now chiefly as a writer of prose, was for many years before the public, and had imperceptibly introduced a taste for the romantic tale, with rhyming lines; indeed, from 1799 to 1815, or we may say till 1820, Scott was building up or adding to his fame as a poet. But this fame is not an enduring one; indeed he himself felt his own weakness, although he battled steadily and long for a place on Parnassus' Hill. His translation of "Goetz von Berlichingen," appeared in 1799; his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" in 1802; his "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which, says a critic, "instantly stamped him as one of the greatest of living poets," in 1805; "Marmion," 1808; "Lady of the Lake," 1810; "Don Roderick," 1812; "Rokeby," 1813; and "Field of Waterloo," 1815. So that for many years Scott's name was constantly before the public with a fresh poem, demanding a fresh wreath. But in all that he has written, though there are many poetic ideas very *sweetly expressed,* there are scarcely a hundred lines *of real poetic worth.* Two or three songs of Burns, or

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